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Donald Hodel, Watt In Sheep's Clothing

ROBERT KUTTNER ON THE NEW WELFARE CONSENSUS • SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL ON NIXON'S LEGACY

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Needed: A national energy debate

(The following is excerpted from a talk delivered by Allen E. Murray, chairman and chief executive officer, at Mobil's annual meeting in Seattle May 7.)

There have been many warnings of a U.S. oil crisis to come, including three recent reports by the Department of Energy, the National Petroleum Council, and the American Petroleum Institute. All three included a laundry list of steps the U.S. government could take to avert future shortages and gasoline lines. Some seem reasonable and necessary. Others, like an oil import fee, I consider counterproductive. But I'm not going to debate these possible solutions today.

Instead, I'd simply like to point out some aspects of the topic that are often overlooked. For one thing, the issue is worldwide, and not just a U.S. problem to be solved by U.S. measures. OPEC produces 40% of the Free World's oil every day and the facts of life are such that this nation will never again be able to do without imported oil, some of it from OPEC. The U.S. is not alone in this. Almost every Free World industrialized nation is in the same situation.

Second, I'd like to point out that what's really under discussion is worldwide availability of energy—not just oil. Any energy source will help us. For instance, natural gas can substitute for home heating oil. Nuclear can replace heavy industrial oil for generating electricity. The technology exists to convert coal to gasoline. Canadian gas, French nuclear plants and Wyoming coal can all make our oil outlook more secure.

Third, any rational discussion of our energy future requires a long range commitment. Energy is an enormous business, and it will take years to affect the direction in which we are going. Current proposals, such as the decontrol of natural gas, removal of the windfall profits tax and opening up more areas for exploration have merit—but they are only stopgap measures. While they should be done, they aren't long range solutions. Finally, solving any issue of this magnitude requires trade-offs and a clear agreement on national goals. When we object to the level of oil imports, have we thought through the alternatives? Are we willing to burn more coal? Should we have more nuclear plants? Should we use higher prices to force energy savings? What is it we really want?

These issues are going to affect our entire lives. They will affect our environment, our national security, our federal and local budgets, our trade balance and the quality of our lives for generations to come.

We need a national debate. A debate where all the alternatives are discussed. A debate where we must eventually agree—although it won't be easy—on where we want the United States to be twenty or fifty years from now. A debate that sets a framework for action.

Our government owes this to us. Stopgap—often politicized—measures are not enough.

How will Mobil be affected? Regardless of the options chosen, there will be plenty of opportunities ahead for enterprising, flexible, efficient multinational companies who can bring consumers all over the world the energy they want and need. This is, of course, the kind of company we already are. But sensible energy policies would make our work easier and more productive. They would also make everybody's economic future infinitely more secure.

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE SMOKING GUN FALLACY

There ain't no smoking gun.
—President Reagan, June 17

First he said he knew nothing about it, then he said he knew all about it and in fact had ordered it and it was perfectly legal, and then he said, "I wasn't giving those orders because no one had asked or had told me what was truly happening there," and now he says there's "no smoking gun." How much more of this management style are we expected to take?

Reagan was clever to fasten onto the "smoking gun" standard at this stage in the Iranamok proceedings. Ever since Watergate—where they found the smoking gun, in the form of tapes of Oval Office conversations—this has become the standard by which to judge presidential misbehavior. The media have cooperated in this, by gloating over their Watergate triumph and emphasizing the search for the smoking gun in subsequent scandals. Under the smoking gun standard, the Iranamok scandal may well fade away as Reagan claims it is doing. But the smoking gun standard misrepresents the issues at stake in three ways.

First, it suggests that any conclusion about what happened must await definitive evidence. There's apparently a memo addressed to Reagan, describing the diversion of Iranian arms sale profits to the *contras*, but no proof that he actually read it. Short of closed-circuit camera photos showing him reading the memo—combined, perhaps, with electroencephalogram tapes indicating that his mind was engaged that day—some people will cling to the belief that there's "no proof." This kind of thinking tends to be highly selective. There are people who believe Alger Hiss is innocent, too, but I doubt there are any who apply the same degree of skepticism to the evidence against Hiss and Reagan.

Second, the smoking gun standard puts too much emphasis on the president's own personal knowledge and behavior. This might be called the Howard Baker corollary, after Baker's famous "what did he know and when did he know it" refrain from the Watergate hearings. The Howard Baker corollary forms the basis for Reagan's spectacular "management style" (or "out-to-lunch") defense: he had nothing to do with making and executing policy on one of the central concerns of his administration. The media, by concentrating on the search for goods against Reagan personally, implicitly promote the idea that he can be exculpated in this way.

It may even be true that the president was this, er, detached. But that shouldn't excuse him from responsibility for the actions of his subordinates. One amazing development at this stage in the scandal is how little pressure there is on Reagan to make amends, or even seem contrite, over what is already known about the behavior of his administration. Does he still think Ollie North is a hero?

Third, the smoking gun standard suggests that the key question is illegality, and that anyone who can't be convicted for breaking the law is entitled to feel fully vindicated. Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams chose his words carefully when testifying to Congress last fall about reports of government help to the *contras*. "We have not received a dime from a foreign government," he said, meaning he'd solicited money from Brunei but hadn't received it yet.

That, and the fact that he wasn't under oath, may save Abrams from indictment. But should it allow Secretary of State Shultz to express his full confidence in Abrams and still preserve his own reputation as a man of unusual judgment and integrity among the Reaganite zealots and sleazeballs? Anyone in the administration who doesn't believe in lies and cover-ups, in shredding documents moments ahead of the investigators, in selling arms to terrorists—and anyone who supports the Central America policy these activities were designed to advance—needn't wait for indictments and convictions to give themselves a little moral distance by speaking out.

What's clear, however, is that many believers in the *contra* policy, within and outside the administration, don't really regret these activities. They just regret

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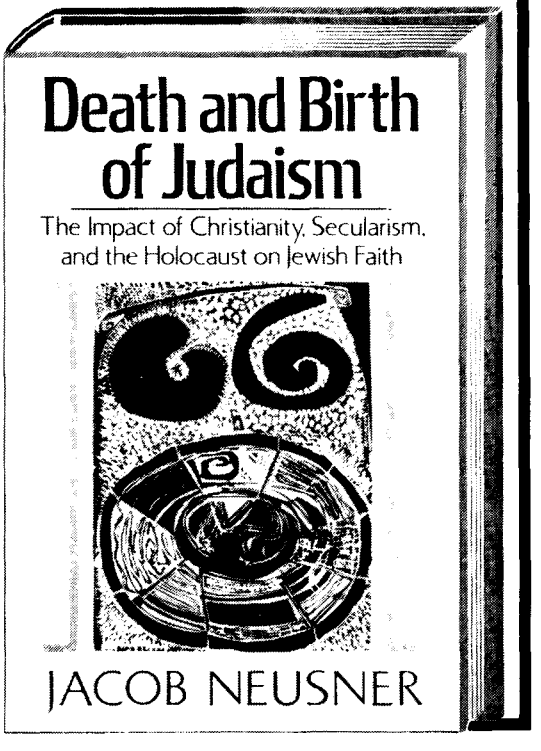

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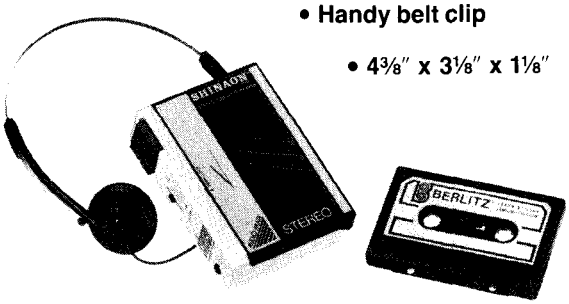

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REMEMBER KHARTOUM

To the editors:

In "Israel's Great Victory" (June 8), Michael Walzer castigates Israel's failure to return promptly the territories captured in June 1967, alleging that "in those first months, Israel's leaders hemmed, hawed, and improvised" until the zeal of the zealots and the intransigence of the far right prevailed. But nowhere does he mention the Khartoum Declaration of August 1967.

At Khartoum the Arab leaders met and proclaimed to the world, in those same first months, the "three no's" vis-à-vis Israel: no recognition, no negotiations, and no peace. It makes no sense for Walzer to blame internal Israeli politics alone for the failure to negotiate the immediate return of the territories. In 1967 Israel was clearly prepared for substantial territorial compromise, given someone with whom to negotiate. And Khartoum was not a transient Arab tantrum; in 1979 it was invoked to ostracize Egypt from the Arab world for signing the Camp David accords, and it is still in effect today.

It is time to start looking beyond Israel's borders for the obstacles to Middle East peace and to recognize that Palestinian nationalism and the PLO have been and are being manipulated, not for the benefit of the Palestinians, but rather for individual and national interests within a bitterly divided Arab world.

ROBERT A. RIESMAN
Providence, Rhode Island

CHILI RELATIONS

To the editors:

A few days ago at a grocery store in a small suburb of Osaka, I purchased a can of Old El Paso Chili. At 450 yen (three dollars) it was a rather expensive can of chili. The label was printed entirely in English. The American company that makes Old El Paso Chili, Pet Incorporated of St. Louis, Missouri, is apparently unaware that Japan is a Japanese-speaking country. As one may imagine, Pet Inc. sells very few cans of chili here. Richard Gephardt, who also hails from St. Louis, claims that the Japanese are "culturally and politically 'immature' and 'corrupt' " ("Gephardt's Inside Moves" by Morton Kondracke, June 1). He probably regards the use of the Japanese language by the Japanese people as yet another "unfair trade barrier" designed to thwart American exports to Japan.

JOHN E. VAN SANT
Osaka, Japan

BOOMERS' BABIES

To the editors:

There's a large measure of truth in Charles Paul Freund's tongue-in-cheek comment that baby boom parents "cannot simply use their own parents as role models" (Zeitgeist Checklist, June 8). Admissions testing of public and private school-bound preschoolers makes demands on parents that didn't exist 30-odd years ago. Dubbed the "Baby Boards," this widespread use of preschool testing is largely responsible for the boom in parenting "how-to" publications. I'm just finishing a parent's test handbook. My research shows the majority of Little Boomers will take an admissions or placement test before they're six years old. They will need an IQ of at least 120 just to be noticed by overworked admissions directors in big-city private schools, which are often the only alternative to a failing urban school system.

Children from less affluent socioeconomic groups will have to prove they're "ready" for public school entrance by scoring well on subjective, IQ look-alike tests. If they don't, they'll have to stay home or spend two years completing kindergarten, making them "old-timers" by the time they finally reach the first grade. Today's generation of preschool parents must teach their tots all they need to know to pass these tests just to give them a chance at a reasonably good, uninterrupted education.

JACQUELINE ROBINSON
West Groton, Massachusetts

RECYCLABLE RESEARCH

To the editors:

Toward the end of his review of Leslie Frewin's biography of *The Late Mrs.*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JULY 6, 1987

WORSE THAN WATT

Secretary of the Interior Donald P. Hodel, once the most unobtrusive of Cabinet officers, shed his obscurity forever last month. He committed an environmental howler that reminded the country of his crackpot predecessor, James Watt. Calling for the Reagan administration to reconsider its proposal of international controls on fluorocarbons that threaten the earth's ozone layer, Hodel argued that the government could simply mount a public awareness campaign advocating "personal protection," such as increased use of hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen lotions. President Reagan's own Environmental Protection Agency ridiculed the suggestion, and it set off a wave of editorial and cartoon attacks against Hodel, heretofore the recipient of scanty but mostly laudatory press attention.

Hodel does not make that kind of mistake very often. He took the job in 1985 preaching conciliation and pledging to work with environmental groups. He does not share Watt's abrasive political style, and gets along relatively well with reporters and with members of Congress. He is a valued Republican fund-raiser, in demand on the lecture circuit, and even touted (at least by his staff) as a possible vice presidential nominee or chairman of the Republican Party.

By all accounts Hodel is an incomparably smoother politician than Watt. Yet he served as undersecretary at Interior from 1981 to '83, and Watt's policies have been Hodel's all along. Hodel just pursues them more with more tact. Usually.

Largely unnoticed by anyone other than environmental groups and interested localities, Hodel has implemented a sweeping program of opening public lands for private use and directing government money away from protection of the environment and toward the benefit of large energy and agribusiness concerns. Hodel's agenda includes the following:

Ozone. Although nobody regards "personal protection" as a serious option, Hodel's complaints have forced the reconsideration of the one bright spot in Reagan's environmental record: the State Department's and the EPA's determination that the United States lead the way toward the virtual elimination of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) emissions in ten to 15 years. With international ozone negotiations already under way, the CFC industry went looking for an advocate. They found Hodel more than willing. He managed to get his own people included in the negotiating team, and has created a controversy in the administration over a previously settled policy.

Offshore drilling. Hodel had reached an agreement with the California congressional delegation that would have restricted offshore drilling to a small part of the California coast. When the oil industry protested, Hodel reneged on the deal.

Alaska wilderness. Raising the specter of gas lines, Hodel has recommended that 1.5 million acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge be opened for oil exploration and drilling. Environmentalists protest that the refuge is home to several key endangered species. Drilling here might be worth it if the area is really "another Prudhoe Bay," as Assistant Secretary William P. Horn says. However, the Interior Department's own study of the refuge's oil prospects estimates the chance of finding *any* affordably exploitable oil deposits at only one in five.

Strip Mine Reclamation. During the first years of the Reagan administration, when Hodel was acting, as he says, as "chief operating officer" of Interior, the budget of the Office of Surface Mining, the agency charged with enforcing regulations on strip mines, was cut by more than a third. Nearly half of OSM's employees retired, resigned, or were fired. Today $150 million in fines remain uncollected. In Kentucky, one of the nation's largest coal-producing states, where the violations are rampant, environmentalists charge that there is virtually no regulation at all.

Water Subsidies. Hodel and the department are backing

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away from new rules that would reduce the huge government subsidies for irrigation water in the West. Thanks to this welfare handout for rich farmers, water worth more than $100 per acre/foot sells for less than ten dollars per acre/foot. Insane both on grounds of equity and on grounds of efficient use of natural resources, these subsidies also aggravate the surplus of farm products by encouraging planting on lands that would be too expensive to farm without cheap water.

National Parks. According to a 1986 General Accounting Office report, the Bureau of Land Management has allowed mining on federal lands designated for parks and wilderness areas, and does not enforce federal laws that require miners of federal land to restore it to its previous condition. Hodel has also permitted drilling and strip mining on land directly adjacent to parks, often with adverse effects on the parks themselves. And he has politicized the Park Service, firing or hamstringing conservationists there, and supporting increased commercial use of the parks and tourist gimcrackery such as airplane flights through the Grand Canyon.

Acid Rain. In February, a time when U.S.-Canadian relations were strained over environmental and trade issues, Hodel held a press conference at which he characterized the Canadian desire for tighter U.S. controls on acid rain as a plot to make the United States more dependent on Canadian energy. He called Canadian pressure on the acid rain issue "their efforts to make it more costly and difficult to generate electricity in the United States."

Oil Leases. With oil companies "strapped for cash," Hodel wants to rearrange the oil leasing system so that companies would pay little money up front, in effect discounting the leases. This is only part of an aggressive oil and oil shale leasing program, in which thousands of drilling tracts will

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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1. 'O SOLO MIO

Summit aftermath. The press has pounced on Reagan's weak Venice performance, dismissing him as "stalled" or worse. The senility theme has made its third appearance, with Reagan's ability to complete his presidency again questioned. Even Howard Baker's can-do reputation is gone. The Iranamok hearings are likely to reflect this new blooding with increasingly anti-Reagan probes.

2. ENGULFED

Gulf policy. Criticism of Reagan Gulf policy remains unrelenting, but the *Stark*'s behavior is also causing ripples. Even conservatives are publicly dismayed by the military's performance under Reagan (citing the Beirut fiasco and Grenada), and by his handling of responsibility (no courts-martial). Stand-tall military pride is his last line of defense, and it is crumbling. See No. 5.

3. RULE BRITANNIA

Thatcher. The hot angle on Thatcher's re-election was that she's been crowned Queen of the Western Alliance by the U.S. media. Quite apart from the culture's slavish Anglophilism, this story is really about Reagan, who seems to have been consigned to the political trash heap.

4. STRAIGHT DOPES?

AIDS. From George Will to the New York *Native*, the focus of AIDS commentary has veered. Once again it is gays and drug users who are the disease's victims. Africa notwithstanding, straight men here aren't contracting AIDS, according to some gay reporters. Tiny percentages indicating otherwise are due to lying, they say, and much AIDS press treatment has been a staggering hype.

5. RED IN THE FACE

Marine "spies." Wait a minute. The military is dropping all the hard-core charges against Marines accused of Moscow spying. This was a gigantic story three months ago, but somehow the bottom has dropped out. The papers are sputtering with indignation: Was there ever a story? Then what happened to it? If there wasn't, what was all the fuss about? Not unreasonable questions.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

6. FACES IN THE CROWD

South Korea. Coverage of Seoul's disturbances may be heavy on action footage, but it's almost entirely depersonalized. Lacking are the standard dramatis personae: no Marcos-like villain, no martyrs, no apparent good guy. (Kim Dae Jung, an occasional hero, is under house arrest.) The U.S. angle seems stuck on the discomfiture of the 1988 Olympics. Quick now, who's the president of South Korea?

7. NEWS FIT TO PRINT

Press ethics. There's certainly a post-Hart era here, though nobody seems to know what it amounts to. It's affected Barney Frank and Richard Celeste so far, with the private life of— *aha!*—at least one media celebrity threatening to bubble over as well. The *New York Times*'s recent fishing expedition into candidates' lives appalled some commentators, but the "debate" is fitful because the press is in genuine disagreement over its new duties.

8. DISHING OUT POLITICS

1988. Never mind Biden. Babbitt and du Pont staged a debate recently that was uplinked to 700 TV stations, complete with post-debate interviews. This shows that extensive national coverage can be gained outside the networks, potentially changing the rules. The networks' role in the national life continues to slip in other ways, with affiliate pre-emptions of network programming climbing steadily.

9. WHO BOUGHT J.R.?

Ethics. High school students in a recent poll believe businessmen will do virtually anything for a profit, including drug-dealing (52 percent), blackmail (63 percent), marketing shoddy goods (37 percent), and even murder (17 percent if the victim is an insider who knows too much, 13 percent if the victim is a competitor). Business leaders attribute the views to TV portrayals. By the way, the students said they'd do much the same for a profit.

10. COMING OUT IN THE WASH

The family. Bristol-Myers is advertising on MTV. So is Lever Bros. Proctor & Gamble's not only on rock TV, it's putting up posters on campus. Many household products have joined makeup and jeans ads in teen magazines. Why? Between single-parent homes and working mothers, many teens now have household duties. Average customer ages for such products have dropped by ten years.

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be transferred to oil companies, with little effort to see that oil actually be produced on them. Such "area-wide" leasing lowers the amount companies pay far below the actual value of the land; according to the GAO, the new leasing practices saved oil companies about $7 billion for the first ten sales alone. This is, in effect, a wholesale "privatization" program, geared toward getting environmentally sensitive public lands into private hands.

As Watt's deputy, Hodel oversaw the "streamlining" of the federal coal leasing program. In 1982 the Interior Department held the largest sale of public coal ever, in which they sold coal leases in the Powder River area of Wyoming to energy companies at a small fraction of their market value. The incident prompted Congress to shut down the coal leasing program in 1983, and to appoint a commission to investigate it. This was the commission that Watt labeled "a black, a woman, two Jews, and a cripple," a remark that ultimately forced him to resign.

In the late '60s and early '70s, Hodel served as deputy administrator and then administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration, a federal agency that distributes hydroelectric power from the New Deal dams of the Northwest. At BPA he became the chief architect and promoter of the plan for the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS, or Whoops) to build five nuclear power plants, which turned into one of the most spectacular financial fiascos in history. Hodel coerced municipal utilities into signing up for WPPSS (and borrowing money for the plan) by threatening to end BPA's commitment to meet the power demands of their customers. Hodel's BPA publicized wildly overwrought estimates of the region's power needs. Without Whoops, he declared in 1974, "Homes will be cold and dark or factories will close." In fact, the region was running a power surplus by 1983, with only one WPPSS plant on-line.

Hodel now acknowledges that he may have made some mistakes with BPA and Whoops. Yet a similar pattern of incestuous relationships with industry has developed in his management of national resource policies. Last fall a House Appropriations subcommittee reported that the Interior Department is failing to collect as much as a billion dollars a year in royalties from oil and gas companies that produce on federal lands. Even worse are the administration policies that lease mineral-rich lands to energy firms at cut rates, or allow them to lease lands without producing on them.

Hodel still favors the outlandish prophesies of energy doom that served the Northwest so ill when he was at BPA. Attempting to justify the administration proposals for protectionist measures and tax breaks to help shore up American oil companies, as well as his own plans to drill for prohibitively expensive oil in the Alaska wilderness, Hodel predicted that "people will be sitting in gas lines within two to five years." Though Hodel warns of renewed dependence on OPEC, during his time at or near the helm of U.S. energy policy, he has made virtually no effort to conserve or find alternative sources of energy.

The Reagan administration is full of officials who undermine the programs they are appointed to enforce, and of officials who establish closer-than-comfortable relationships with industries they are supposed to police. But the failure of the administration's environmental policy is not just a matter of bad appointees: it is a failure of philosophy. Hodel's idiotic "personal protection" plan was an unwitting comment on Reaganite extremism. Depletion of the ozone layer is one problem that cannot be addressed usefully through private initiative. It is a social problem requiring a societal—that is, a government—solution. If polls are any indication, the environment is one issue on which people who disagree about almost everything else favor an active government approach. Most people understand. Only the Reagan administration doesn't get it.

Death Of An American

Bernard Linder went to Nicaragua to take sides in a nasty civil war in which neither camp fights by Marquess of Queensberry rules. If Congress would permit the U.S. Army to train the *contras* as a disciplined soldiery, the armed peasants who largely make up the anti-Sandinista guerrilla forces might no longer do things like shoot the wounded they'd ambushed. But ambushes and shoot-outs there surely would be: the social base for the military opposition grows ever larger.

Even Linder, with his own illusions about the meaning of the Nicaraguan revolution, must have known that there was a war going on. When he walked into that *contra* ambush, armed and in the company of an armed militia unit, he was no longer an innocent civilian non-combatant. He was a soldier of the revolution—a *Sandalista* recruit in the Sandinista war. Judging from the elegies spoken for him by his family and his comrades, that is precisely how he saw himself.

The death of a young person is always painful and poignant. But the fact that here was an American casualty in a struggle that has already claimed the lives of thousands of Nicaraguans across the ideological battle lines is of no special moral significance. It is ironic that those who claim universal values as the underpinning of their politics should fix on the fact that this victim of Nicaraguan's civil strife is an American. Of course, the intent is purely propagandistic. Those congressmen now so obsessively outraged by Linder's death demonstrate their indifference to how Nicaraguans die—and also how they are forced to live.

Notebook

□ JUDGING FROM HARVARD'S commencement rites this year, the passion for divestment among the privileged young has now spent itself. On to other matters. Graduates from the school of public health hurled packages of

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condoms into the air as they were awarded their degrees. Ethically, this was about as serious as the new MBAs waving their dollar bills. The morally presumptuous protest took place outside Harvard Yard. There Alan Dershowitz—a professor of law who has made a great principle out of his willingness to defend anyone for money or publicity—was distributing leaflets protesting the award of an honorary degree to Richard von Weizsäcker, president of the Federal Republic of Germany. Dershowitz's complaint was that von Weizsäcker defended his father, a top German diplomat who served the Nazis, at the Nuremberg trials 40 years ago. (Von Weizsäcker Sr. got five years.) It may well be that the German president still can't bring himself to admit explicitly a bitter truth about his own father. But von Weizsäcker has stood against the popular and scholarly tide of guilt-lifting revisionism in Germany at large, arguing for memory, penance, and responsibility. During Bitburg he was almost alone in this insistence. For this, among other acts of bravery and statesmanship, he was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Tel Aviv. And now comes high-minded Professor Dershowitz to visit the sins of the fathers on the children.

☐ WHAT'S IN A NAME, I: Nothing better exemplifies the onanistic quality of American business management, we opined recently in this space (Notebook, March 16), than the effort devoted to changing corporate names. United Airlines became UAL Incorporated when acronyms were in fashion, then became Allegis a couple of months ago, in keeping with the current rage for sci-fi monikers. Now the man responsible for "Allegis," Richard J. Ferris, has been dumped, and the new chairman, Frank Olson, says he's going to change the company's name back to United Airlines.

☐ WHAT'S IN A NAME, II: This office recently received a press release from the "Minimum Wage Coalition to Save Jobs." It is, of course, a lobbying group that is opposed to raising the minimum wage. The "Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy" is an industry group lobbying against tighter regulation of chlorofluorocarbons—the gases that are depleting the ozone layer. That is, it wants as little "CFC Policy" as possible. Readers are invited to submit other examples of Orwellian inversions among the names of political interest and lobbying groups.

☐ CALL IT THE NEW NEW FEDERALISM: The Supreme Court ruled on June 1 that states could pass laws mandating severance pay and other benefits for workers who lose their jobs through plant closings. The Court rejected the implausible contention of the Meese Justice Department that such state laws are "pre-empted" by federal pension legislation. That the Reaganites would reach for such a flimsy argument shows, once again, that their ostensible devotion to federalism depends on whose ox is gored. "States' rights" means the right of the states to do things the administration approves of.

☐ THEY ALL LOOK ALIKE: "The photograph on pages 248-49 is of the funeral of Chernenko. The photograph on pages 250-51 is the funeral of Brezhnev."—errata slip in *Gorbachev's Challenge, Economic Reform in the Age of High Technology* by Marshall I. Goldman (W. W. Norton)

☐ THE GOULASH ARCHIPELAGO: Among Soviet bloc nations, Janos Kádár's Hungary enjoys a uniquely good press in the West. Its films win Academy Awards, its novelists speak freely at international conferences. As a signal of American approval, President Reagan recently renewed Hungary's most-favored-nation trade status with the United States. But Kádár's apparatchiks have refused Janós Kis, founder of *Beszélo*, the leading journal of the Hungarian democratic opposition, a passport so that he can accept an invitation to teach at the New School in New York. Apparently even Hungarian *glasnost* has its limits.

☐ SUMMER DAZE:

No sign that AIDS is spreading rapidly among U.S. heterosexuals, expert says

—*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 5, page A9

AIDS to become a disease of heterosexuals, expert predicts

—same paper, same day, page A8

(thanks to Jeffrey T. Broihier, Seattle, Washington)

Low Air Fares Are Here To Stay

—*Wall Street Journal*, June 9, page 35

Summer Climb: Texas Air Fuels Latest Round of Fare Increases

—same paper, same day, page 37

(thanks to Richard Cohen, New York City)

SPAIN'S SOCIALISTS LOSE SOME GROUND

—*New York Times*, June 11

Spain Vote Reaffirms Strong Support for Socialists

—*Washington Post*, same day

Admiral Warns Of U.S. Losses In Gulf Patrols

—*New York Times*, June 6

Tanker Escort Not Big Risk, Crowe Asserts

—*Washington Post*, same day

(thanks to several readers)

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ON THE HILL

WAR POWERS INACTION

THE VIETNAM WAR inspired a debate that continues to this day about the proper role of Congress in foreign affairs and the use of military force in particular. Congressional resentment over Lyndon Johnson's use of the Tonkin Gulf resolution as authority to conduct the war and over Richard Nixon's invasion of Cambodia with no congressional authority at all led Congress, in 1973, to pass the War Powers Resolution. That law (which passed over Nixon's veto) forbids presidents to introduce armed forces into actual or "imminent" hostilities for more than 60 days without the explicit consent of Congress.

Doves routinely hail the War Powers Act as a means of putting a check on "foreign adventurism." Hawks complain that no strong foreign policy is possible when second-guessed by "535 secretaries of state." But despite the bluster on both sides, Congress has never once used the 60-day clock (which can be extended, at the president's request, to no more than 90 days) to approve or terminate a single military action. Instead, senators and representatives have been drawn to a provision in the law that requires the president to consult with Congress before sending troops into hostile territory. Because it is only occasionally observed by presidents, the consultation requirement has given Congress frequent opportunity, in times of crisis, to complain that the orderly process of government has been subverted.

Thus the true function of the War Powers Act: it allows jittery members of Congress to avoid responsibility for risky military actions, while at the same time avoiding responsibility for the consequences of *not* taking action.

A case in point was the recent attack on the *Stark*. You would think that the death of 37 American servicemen in a war zone would set the 60-day timer ticking. But the issue was complicated by the fact that the attacker, Iraq, was our unofficial ally. After the *Stark* incident, only one member of Congress—Representative Peter DeFazio, a freshman liberal Democrat from Oregon—proposed that the War Powers clock be set to May 17, the day of the attack. The bill went nowhere.

Congress perked up a bit more during the first week of June. President Reagan had proposed to place American flags on 11 Kuwaiti tankers and accompany them with naval convoys to keep oil flowing through the Persian Gulf (and to counter similar efforts by the Soviets). In response, the House and the Senate passed War Powers-esque resolutions requiring the secretary of defense to provide Congress with classified and unclassified information about U.S. actions in the Gulf. Neither resolution addressed the question of whether those actions ought to be carried out, or whether Congress ought to wind the 60-day clock. But both passed quickly, providing fresh evidence that the favorite war power of Congress is the power to complain that it isn't being consulted.

A few brave souls, including Senator Mark Hatfield and Representative Jim Leach, denounced the resolutions as a watered-down substitute for the War Powers Act. (Although Congress hates to use the War Powers Act to wield power, it loves to reaffirm the vows; in 1981 Senator James Exon attached an amendment to a defense bill calling the resolution a "significant safeguard" that ought to be "strictly adhered to.") Another minority fretted that simply asking for information implied that Congress was on the team. Representative Toby Roth, Republican of Wisconsin: "This resolution puts congressional fingerprints on our course of action." Representative Donald Lukens, Republican of Ohio: "Does this put the fingerprints and the handprints of the Congress on that policy?"

These members were remembering the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which inadvertently gave Lyndon Johnson the power to wage war in Vietnam. A fresher memory was the sending of Marines to Lebanon—approved by Congress in advance of the 60-day War Powers deadline—and their hasty retreat after 240 were killed in their barracks by a truck bomb. But in the Tonkin and Lebanon resolutions Congress had made the mistake of taking sides; the beauty of the Persian Gulf resolutions was that they did not.

Congressional leaders reassured nervous dissenters that congressional hands would remain clean. Majority Leader Tom Foley heatedly denied that he was proposing "a sort of Gulf of Tonkin resolution." It was "merely a demand for information." Representative Pat Schroeder called the resolution a "teeny-weeny first step" that "doesn't commit the Congress in any way." Thus assured, the House passed the measure. But a Talmudic dispute had meanwhile arisen between the Senate and the House on the language of the resolution. The House version, which called for information within seven days of the law's enactment, was perceived by the Senate as too weak. Yet the Senate alternative, which called for a report prior to administration action, sounded to the House like tacit approval. After each body passed its own version, Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd papered over the difference: "We now have both houses of Congress firmly on record expressing reservations about the course of administration policy in the Persian Gulf and insisting that Congress be kept fully informed."

It seems fair to ask whether Congress cares as much about being kept informed as it does about going on record pounding its fist and demanding that it be kept informed. The administration had promised that it would notify Congress of its intentions in the Gulf within seven days, as required by the House resolution. Eight days later I phoned a congressional staffer working on the issue and asked him whether this eagerly anticipated report had arrived. "It slipped my mind," he admitted. (The full report didn't come in until five days later.)

Meanwhile Congress has, in Byrd's words, expressed "reservations" about Persian Gulf policy—but it has yet to say whether it will either withdraw or act upon those reservations. To be sure, a few members have proposed getting off the fence. Senators Dale Bumpers and Mark Hatfield submitted a bill proposing that the 60-day clock start tick-

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ing as soon as the reflagging begins. DeFazio now proposes the same on the House side. Another bill, by Senator Claiborne Pell, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, goes further, proposing an outright ban on reflagging. But conventional wisdom rates all these proposals quixotic.

Dante Fascell, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and an author of the War Powers Act, argues that what's really important about the law isn't the mechanism itself so much as "the legal basis to start a public dialogue." Somehow, though, that dialogue never seems quite satisfying. Perhaps it would help if from time to time the conversation included the word "yes" or "no."

TIMOTHY NOAH

Timothy Noah is a congressional correspondent for *Newsweek*.

Ethiopia's murderous transformation.

OUT OF AFRICA

ON FEBRUARY 22 a momentous event passed virtually unnoticed. Ethiopia (more than three times as populous as Angola and Nicaragua combined) formally became a Marxist state, the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. In almost every way, what is arguably Black Africa's most strategically located country has been recast in the Soviet mold.

The state machinery—including Ethiopia's Communist Party, the security apparatus, and the crucial ministries—is integrated into the east bloc network. Millions of peasants have been forcibly collectivized. The Coptic Orthodox Church has been suppressed and co-opted in the manner of Orthodox churches in Russia and in Balkan Communist states. Moscow has been provided with important military bases near the entrance to the Red Sea. And the constitution just promulgated was lifted almost paragraph-for-paragraph from the Soviet constitution. The only major exception is the part dealing with the powers of the president, which is based on the Romanian constitution. It gives the general secretary of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam, the kind of absolute power enjoyed by Romania's Nicolae Ceauşescu.

Outside of the Warsaw Pact only a handful of countries have ever really implemented Soviet-style communism. Angola and Nicaragua, the Reagan Doctrine's principal targets, have not gone through such an intense societal transformation. With grim zeal and efficiency the ruling Ethiopian Amharas, beneficiaries of the only culture in Black Africa with a written language going back to antiquity, have effected a Stalinist reorganization of the peasantry that less competent radical elites in Africa could only theorize about. As in the Ukraine, Cambodia, Tibet, and other places where communism was violently introduced, famine has been one of the byproducts.

What distinguishes Ethiopia is that the American media was there in force. In most cases it covered the famine in complete ignorance, failing to place it in context with the other internal changes. This is largely due to the peculiar style of the Ethiopian revolution. Whereas in Cambodia a class of primitive peasants, the Khmer Rouge, brutalized an urban elite, in Ethiopia it was an urban elite that brutalized a class of primitive peasants. And the only Ethiopian officials to whom journalists had access belonged to the most Westernized stratum of this elite—men thoroughly sophisticated in their ability to conceal the regime's real role in the famine. Some of these officials, such as the head of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Dawit Wolde Giorgis, would later defect to the United States, where they would publicly contradict much of what they had led journalists to believe in 1984 and '85 in Addis Ababa.

ETHIOPIA'S DRIFT toward communism began in 1977 and '78, when Moscow delivered a billion dollars' worth of arms to Mengistu, allowing him to hold off Eritrean guerrillas in the north and to defeat the Somalis, who had launched an invasion in the southwest. By saving the Amhara-dominated empire from disintegration, Moscow was able to exert considerable new influence. East bloc advisers helped formulate the 1979 proclamation on collectivization.

The ruling Amharas have succeeded in collectivizing the Tigrean and Oromo peasantries through two programs, operating side by side, in different parts of the country: resettlement and villagization. Though resettlement has attracted more publicity in America than villagization, it is actually the smaller, less significant, and perhaps even less brutal of the two. In 1984 and '85 over a half million peasants, mostly Tigreans from northern Ethiopia, were forcibly resettled in the southwest. The program ground to a halt in 1986, largely due to international pressure, but is believed to have started up again this year.

At first the resettlement issue was an interesting sideshow to the main famine story. Journalists and diplomats had caught glimpses of people being herded into trucks and airplanes, and one American diplomat went so far as to say "the selection process recalled Auschwitz." But during the most intense period of famine coverage, the issue stayed in the background due to lack of evidence. In February 1985, after media coverage of Ethiopia had peaked, researchers from the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based organization Cultural Survival arrived in Sudan to interview Ethiopian refugees from resettlement. Founded in 1972 by Harvard University social scientists, Cultural Survival has impeccable credentials. Its reports on endangered ethnic groups in Africa, Asia, and Latin America criticized right-wing and left-wing governments alike, and had been used by the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and foreign governments. The Cultural Survival team, led by Dr. Jason W. Clay, interviewed 277

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refugees at six sites in eastern Sudan using translators unconnected with any of the guerrilla outfits fighting the Ethiopian government. All interviews were taped and reviewed a second time by different translators back in America. The result was a 250-page monograph that must stand as one of the most richly detailed studies of collectivization and its human rights abuses in the normally murky reality of the Third World.

Over 40 percent of the refugees interviewed said that in the course of resettlement they were beaten, and 85 percent said they were separated from at least one member of their immediate families. Amete Gebremedhin, a Tigrean in her early 40s, stated that after she had objected to being taken away from her husband and children, "The soldiers laughed and said: 'What do you care about your children? You will find new ones. . . .' " The militia would often surround a village, burn the crops, take the animals, and round people up. Many were held in prisons with common criminals before being transferred to the new sites, where little food and water were available, and several months of hard labor followed. Sixty percent of those interviewed said they actually saw people die or be killed. The report states: "If even the most conservative estimates of the death rate (33 per 10,000 per day) are halved and then halved again . . . then 50,000 to 100,000 of those resettled in this massive program may already have been dead by July 1985."

Many of Cultural Survival's findings were corroborated by reports conducted from inside Ethiopia by State Department officials, the Red Cross League, and the Irish charity Concern. But these studies were not made public, so the media, which by the fall of 1985 were fast losing interest in Ethiopia, treated Dr. Clay's analysis with skepticism. Finally, in December 1985, a relief organization operating in Addis Ababa, the Paris-based Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), went public with a report alleging that 100,000 people had perished in the resettlement program. MSF claimed that "one of the most massive violations of human rights" was "being carried out with funds and gifts from international aid."

The French doctors took their case to the American public in early 1986, but the story's impact was blunted by the space shuttle disaster and the absence of television footage showing the settlers being abused. In March 1986 further evidence was provided by a new group of refugees, who had recently escaped from Ethiopia and were interviewed in Sudan by *Washington Post* correspondent Blaine Harden. Then there was the admission by former Ethiopian RRC Commissioner Dawit that "force had to be used, and a vast number of people were herded like cattle, loaded on trucks and airplanes, and sent to the south. The whole operation was run by the Workers' Party and its cadres." But it was mid-1986 already, and America's interest in Ethiopia had months before been submerged by events in the southern part of the African continent.

If the hard truth about resettlement came to light too late to make a strong impact, villagization became known even later. The very word, so abstract and ungrammatical, seemed to mark the story for instant oblivion. By the end of 1986 close to four million Muslim Oromos, many from the eastern Hararghe region, had been forcibly uprooted through this nightmarish scheme—nearly eight times as many people as in the resettlement program. And 29 million others are slated for the same fate by the mid-1990s. The ideological element is paramount: Mengistu has openly denounced "kulaks," and many of the victims of villagization have been relatively well-off peasant farmers.

THE BASIC outlines of the program are not in dispute. The army moves into a group of villages, requisitions the crops and livestock, and forces the inhabitants to tear down their huts piece by piece. Then the peasants are force-marched, with the remnants of their homes on their backs, to a new, central location previously selected by party cadres. The new site usually lacks a mosque, a school, and an adequate, nearby water source. But it comes equipped with a guard tower and Workers' Party banners. Almost all of the 14 Oromo refugees I interviewed separately, at length, on the Somali border spoke of gang rapes and mosque desecrations. Several research organizations came up with the same results in interviews with different groups of Oromos who fled from Hararghe months earlier. And these studies are buttressed by the investigations of other journalists. As in the case of resettlement, the evidence is impressive. "Refugees fleeing dictatorships . . . have all been reliable witnesses of the states they left behind," writes William Shawcross in *The Quality of Mercy*, a book about the Cambodian famine.

It is difficult to imagine the scale of suffering and brutality. Since 1984 perhaps 50 times as many blacks have been starved (famine deaths aside), beaten, and worked to death in Ethiopia as have died at the hands of South African security forces. And many of those people were not drought victims prior to being uprooted. Their first experience of hunger was in the process of resettlement or villagization.

Ethiopia is now part of that zone of darkness where anything can happen away from the television cameras and few in America would know or care. No U.S. interests are jeopardized by the inhuman actions of the regime. Perhaps if the suffering were occurring at the hands of a colorful madman like Idi Amin or Muammar Qaddafi, the story could be rescued from oblivion. But Mengistu is a methodical killer with no penchant for buffoonery, and his crimes have little mass market appeal. What is happening to millions of Ethiopians is simply too obscure for most Westerners to know about. Another failure of modern memory may be in progress.

ROBERT D. KAPLAN

Robert D. Kaplan, an Athens-based journalist, is writing a book about Ethiopia and Sudan on a grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation and the Institute for Educational Affairs.

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They're wrong about the GOP contenders.

THE SUMMER LINE

HERE'S THE early summer line on the Republican presidential race. Vice President George Bush is in the lead, but he's been blindsided by Iranamok and is bleeding badly. He won't survive. Pressing him tightly is Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, a rising force and now odds-on to win the nomination. Well behind Dole there's Representative Jack Kemp of New York, who fancies himself the ideological heir to President Reagan. But Kemp can't get any "traction," as Patrick J. Buchanan puts it. Trailing Kemp are Pete du Pont, the former Delaware governor who is campaigning in interesting enough fashion to assure himself a Cabinet position in the next Republican administration, and former Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada, who is said to have gotten in the race too late. Then there are the two oddballs, former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr., the closest thing to a Rockefeller liberal in the field, and Pat Robertson, the television evangelist whose star is sinking with the Jim Bakker scandal. Haig and Robertson are dead meat.

Sorry, but the early summer line is wrong. It's right about du Pont and Haig, but that's about it. Candidates aren't soaring (Dole) or plummeting (Bush). In the Republican presidential race, there's no action, no drama, no movement at all. There are candidates, but no campaign, and no clash of ideas. The strongest words aimed in recent months by one candidate at another were du Pont's crack that Bush, by remaining aloof from the pack, is trapped in a "cocoon." Others, like Kemp, are thinking harsher thoughts about Bush and Dole, but they bite their tongues. Kemp's idea of criticism is the boast that he's the only candidate who hasn't supported a tax increase or backed a cut in Social Security benefits. For now and maybe for the rest of the year, Kemp plans no more than occasional needling of Bush and Dole.

No grand scheme is being played out either. For two decades, the fight among Republicans has been between the party establishment and the conservative movement, the regulars versus the zealots. The conservatives usually had a majority. But the fault line isn't clear anymore. Many of the conservative insurgents who backed Reagan in 1976 and 1980 are the party establishment now. "The party's conservative," says Lee Atwater, Bush's campaign manager. "Reagan moved the party over to the right." What this means for 1988, Atwater says, is that the conservative ideologues aren't "the nominating wing" now. The establishment wing is. It includes former outsiders who are now party regulars. They're still conservative, but housebroken. They want to nominate a winner, even if he's not a conservative purist. What's left on the outside is a smaller conservative wing, composed of social issue conservatives, the Christian right, and supply-siders.

There's a widely held view among Republicans that there are really two campaigns being waged, one between Bush and Dole for the establishment vote, the other among Kemp, Laxalt, and du Pont for the conservatives. In the early primaries, the theory goes, either Bush or Dole will emerge as a finalist, and so will one of the conservatives. Then the two will fight it out to the convention in July, just as Gerald Ford and Reagan did in 1976, and Bush and Reagan did in 1980.

Right now the theory looks unrealistic in the extreme. Bush and Dole are so far ahead in the polls that they threaten to snuff out conservative challengers. The latest Gallup Poll, taken April 30, found Bush ahead of Dole by 34 percent to 18 percent. Kemp leads the conservatives with nine percent. The Harris Poll of May 11 was similar: Bush, 31 percent; Dole, 27; Kemp, 13. And the ABC News-*Washington Post* survey of June found the same: Bush, 35 percent; Dole, 27; Kemp, 11. Polls in Iowa and New Hampshire also point up the Bush-Dole dominance. In late April the *Des Moines Register* pegged Bush at 40 percent in Iowa, Dole at 33, Kemp at seven. In New Hampshire the Bush-Dole lock on the race is less pronounced. A *Boston Globe* survey in late March put Bush first with 49 percent, Dole second with 12, Kemp third with eight. A more recent *Boston Herald* poll in New Hampshire put Bush at 25 percent, Dole at 8.1, Kemp at 7.6. The *Herald* found 53.3 percent of the GOP voters undecided.

For the conservatives, the New Hampshire numbers aren't as encouraging as they seem, which isn't very encouraging to begin with. If Bush and Dole do as well in Iowa on February 8 as the *Register* poll suggests, they will attract all the media coverage in the days before the February 16 primary in New Hampshire. Kemp, Laxalt, and du Pont will vanish from sight. "The question is, will the winner of the Bush-Dole fight have so much momentum that he'll blow over the conservatives?" says Richard Williamson, a former White House aide who's advising Laxalt. Charles Black, Kemp's campaign manager, says that one of the conservatives has to come in first or second in Iowa or New Hampshire, or else fade. Should Bush and Dole finish one-two in both states, "the press isn't going to write that some third-place guy now challenges the first-place guy," he says. The conservative winner will be written out of the race as surely as John Glenn was after Walter Mondale and Gary Hart came in one-two in Iowa and New Hampshire in the 1984 Democratic contest. Of course, in the summer of 1983 Glenn was where Dole is now, and an insurgent, Hart, supplanted him.

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM about Bush is wrong on two counts: that his candidacy is hanging by a thread and that he's been damaged badly by Iranamok. Bush is no juggernaut, but he has held up fairly well as the front-runner. He's extraordinarily well-financed and well-organized. As of June 10, he had raised $8 million (his goal had been a measly $3.5 million). This was better than double any other candidate. Bush's Iowa organization is far and away the best, and last June 13 his lieutenants were able to bring together about 400 organizers from the 14

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Southern states with primaries on Super Tuesday, March 8, for a strategy session in Atlanta. Iranamok hasn't helped Bush, but any downside effects are marginal. The reason is that Bush just wasn't involved in policy-making on Iran and Central America, and his name rarely crops up in the congressional hearings. The flip side of this is that Bush has exaggerated his role in White House decision-making, but hyperbole is a lesser sin.

The Bush forces are cocky. "The Iran thing should prove to some people that the vice president is a very doable candidate," says Atwater. The scandal hit the administration "and here he is. He's still standing tall. We're raising money. He's getting out." But Bush has also put off his day of reckoning. The expectation was that he'd begin filling out his political persona in a series of commencement speeches in the spring. He didn't. So he's still in Reagan's shadow, without distinct ideas of his own. Atwater says that Bush decided in December 1984 to put off the start of his emergence "until the spring and summer of 1987." And Bush added, according to Atwater, that he'd "flesh it out in the fall." Now that the time has come, Bush seems less than eager. A good fleshing-out point is the televised debate among Republican candidates in September on public television. Bush declined. Republican strategist John Sears says Bush "is in a terrible situation" because however he answers the question about what he plans for the country, he'll anger people. If he diverges from Reagan, he'll be called disloyal. If he doesn't, he'll be accused of not being his own man. Small wonder, then, that Bush says nothing in his speeches and refuses to appear with other candidates. This could be costly. "He's getting soft and flabby," says GOP consultant Eddie Mahe, "when he could be sharpening his skill while nobody's paying attention."

IF DOLE HAS a strategy for moving past Bush, he hasn't let on. He relies on his great tactical sense to get by, playing things day by day, issue by issue. One day recently he appeared with officials of the National Right to Work Committee to denounce compulsory unionism. A few days later, he filmed an appeal to AFL-CIO members, recalling the "dark days of the Depression" and hinting that he's a closet protectionist. "The U.S. has made many, many sacrifices on behalf of our friends and allies," he said. "We helped them achieve their current prosperity by providing a defense shield and by providing aid and technology. Now it's time for them to play fair." He sounded far more pro-union than the five other Republicans who filmed pitches to the AFL-CIO.

Dole's challenge of Bush is shakier than the polls indicate. "It's too soon to say Dole has all that support," says David Keene, a Dole adviser. Voters, Keene has told Dole, "are now willing to listen. You've got to make the sale." Dole's tendency on the stump is to talk up the deals he's engineered in Congress, but legislative deal-making isn't what folks look for in a president. He's got "to break away from the legislative mentality that's dominated his rhetoric for the last 15 years," says Keene. Reluctantly, Dole agrees. "People keep pushing me to get up and talk about myself," Dole says. "I've been trying to do it. I don't find it very exciting." He also says he'll offer a vision. "When I make my announcement [in the fall], there's got to be a fairly powerful statement of where I differ from the others and where I would take the nation." A lot of personal anecdotes and a vision would transform Dole's style. But the new Bob Dole hasn't arrived yet, and may never. Dole, by the way, is skipping the September debate too. "I'd like to have Bush there when I debate," he says.

The word of mouth in the Washington political community is as bad about Kemp as it is good about Dole. And Kemp does have problems. He's already borrowing against matching federal funds he'll get next January. He's still too windy on the stump. But his campaign has surmounted a series of serious challenges, and he's finally inching up in the polls. His allies dissuaded Buchanan from entering the race, and he's warded off the Robertson threat. The evangelist has been unable to cut into Kemp's secular constituency, and now Kemp is going after evangelicals. He's allied with Robertson against Bush in Michigan, whose caucuses come January 29. In short, he's in position to claim the evangelical vote if Robertson drops out. And though the PTL shenanigans have hurt Robertson, "The idea that the PTL scandal reaches down and destroys the evangelical movement in Republican politics is laughable," says Jeff Bell, Kemp's deputy campaign manager. He's right. Kemp's biggest problem is that he doesn't seem presidential. He's tried everything to overcome that, even tinted glasses. What would help is a strong performance in his July 20 debate with Democratic presidential candidate Richard Gephardt. Kemp has the potential to stir both establishment and insurgent conservatives, but it's largely unrealized potential.

He'll need to tap that potential to withstand his newest challenges, from du Pont and Laxalt. Du Pont has run an admirable campaign in which he stresses issues such as overhauling the welfare system and phasing out farm subsidies. And he gained from his debate with Democratic contender Bruce Babbitt in Iowa on May 23. The few people who attended the debate thought Babbitt won, but on television du Pont appeared to hold his own. In any case, du Pont got what he needs most, attention. But there's no real evidence of a du Pont surge. It's pathetic to hear him cite straw polls at small Republican gatherings in Iowa—third in Cedar Rapids, fourth in Johnson County—as proof of his rise. But du Pont's a more forceful and persuasive candidate than he was six months ago, and he's taken more seriously.

LAXALT ISN'T taken as seriously as he should be. His ties to Reagan, the GOP establishment, and the conservative movement are worth something. He's settled his libel suit with the McClatchy newspaper chain, and brought together an experienced set of strategists (Lyn Nofziger, Richard Wirthlin, Rich Williamson). But his late start hurts. Laxalt's strategy is to supplant Kemp as the conservative favorite. He knows what he has to do. "If I run reasonably well in Iowa and South Dakota [on Febru-

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ary 23] and if I exceed expectations in New Hampshire—second or first—this campaign will be in orbit," he says. All that is possible, though hardly likely.

The assumption about Robertson and Haig is that neither has anything going. In truth, Robertson may have, but nobody can tell. Whatever strength he has is entirely outside normal political channels. In Iowa his aides talk about turning out 70,000 people at the caucuses. If he pulled this off, he'd win in a landslide. "If he comes in with 30,000, he'll flood the process," says Laxalt. Unlike Robertson, Haig has no organization to speak of. The distinctive thing about him is the absence of right-wing buzzwords. He sounds like an internationalist, Eastern Establishment Republican of a generation ago. His time has passed.

A good measure of how little has occurred in the Republican race in 1987 is the attention that's been lavished on petty power struggles. When there's no movement, reporters write about friction. In the Bush campaign, it's the "adults" (older advisers such as Dean Burch and Nicholas Brady) against the "kids" (younger operatives such as Atwater and Rich Bond). Friction between the two camps continues. In the Kemp campaign, it was the ideologues versus the professionals. The victim of this fight was John Maxwell, who was associated with the ideologues. He was ousted as Kemp's Iowa coordinator and now works for Dole. The Dole operation has feuds of its own. First Sears battled for a dominant role in the campaign, and lost. "Sears has no role," says Dole. Then consultant Keene fought with Robert Ellsworth, the campaign's chief executive. In April Ellsworth told Keene to quit referring to the campaign as "we." Keene says Ellsworth told him the campaign was "me," meaning Ellsworth, and that he, Keene, had "no role" and "won't have." Should I tell the press this? Keene asked. "Absolutely," Ellsworth said, according to Keene. Moments later a reporter called, Keene blabbed, and stories appeared. Why not? The mini-flap was more interesting than anything the candidates have produced.

FRED BARNES

Republican ideas, stale or raw?

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

IF THE PRESS and party faithful will cooperate, there could be a lively philosophical debate in the Republican Party this election—far more so than in the Democratic Party, where a consensus seems to be developing among the presidential candidates around higher taxes to close the deficit, increased spending for education and job training, production quotas on the farm, lower defense budgets, arms control with the Soviets, tough talk with the Japanese, and military disengagement from Central America and the Persian Gulf. The Democrats sorely need a Sam Nunn or a Bill Bradley to prevent the candidates from being all for the same things, some just a little more and others a little less.

Among the Republican candidates, there is also a muting of differences. They all call themselves conservatives and Reaganites. They all profess to support the *contras* and SDI, and to oppose tax increases and protectionism. Sometimes it looks as if the nominating process will hinge solely on the questions of experience, leadership ability, and electability. But as the era of pax Reaganensis comes to an end, the party could well revert to its 1980 condition, when major differences existed on domestic, social, and foreign policy.

Label it as you will, the familiar Republican split still exists: moderates vs. radicals, elitists vs. populists, traditionalists vs. visionaries, Wall Street vs. Main Street, Fords vs. Reagans. George Bush and Bob Dole are back in 1980 form, representing the forces of realism and responsibility. Competing for Ronald Reagan's old role on the radical right are Jack Kemp, Pete du Pont, and Pat Robertson. Paul Laxalt, the president's best friend, would like to be his heir as the bridge between the factions but has yet to define any clear stand on issues. Alexander Haig also says he is working on a comprehensive program, but no one can figure out why he is bothering.

Whether the Republicans actually have a full and fiery issues debate depends upon how comprehensive and forthright front-runners Bush and Dole become about what they really stand for, and whether Kemp and du Pont emerge as strong enough threats to get their novel ideas taken seriously. At the moment, Bush is either in hiding, as his detractors charge, or moving ever so methodically in developing his program for the future.

Months ago, Bush aides said he would use a series of commencement addresses this spring to begin to define himself and show where he differs from President Reagan. The speeches were careful, to say the least, but they did indicate that Bush remains a sturdy establishmentarian

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despite eight years as partner to the Reagan revolutionist. For example, he pledged faithfulness to the Atlantic alliance, which demonstrates a dedication to postwar orthodoxy at a time when some commentators (such as Jack Kemp guru Irving Kristol and Democrat Zbigniew Brzezinski) are calling for de-emphasis of the European commitment. And his speech contained no complaints that the Europeans are failing to bear their fair share of Western defense burdens.

Bush endorsed SDI, as might be expected from Reagan's veep, but said the system might be deployable "not in the short term, but in the long term," thereby differentiating himself from Kemp and other hawks. In the meantime, he's for making the MX missile mobile (as the Carter administration advocated and Nevada's Laxalt prevented from happening in 1981) and for deployment of the single-warhead Midgetman missile, the Democrats' favorite nuke. Bush aides say he intends to be "aggressive" about arms control, which may mean that he's willing to postpone SDI deployment in return for Soviet missile reductions. Kemp wants to make early deployment a Republican litmus test in 1988.

As opposed to Kemp, who calls for "a strategy for victory that says we must go beyond containing communism to the ultimate triumph of freedom and democracy," Bush represents a gradualist policy of winning only "in the long run" through peaceful competition. "Sometimes we hear a shrill call for military superiority," Bush said at the Naval Academy commencement. "At other times we hear the sirens call for unilateral concession. This oscillation is itself part of our difficulty. We need a steady course—a realistic course that advances our purposes and offers long-term hope for a more secure world."

On domestic policy, Bush's major departure from Reaganism was to call for significant increases (amount unspecified) in spending on education. He indicated the school year should be extended, called for upgraded math and science teaching, and said "one of our highest priorities in the 1990s should be to help families finance a college education." At the same time, he called for strict adherence to Gramm-Rudman budget targets without saying where compensating funds might come from. Bush declared in one speech, "We will fight a tax increase every step of the way," but some of his top advisers say he might well go for a "grand compromise" that includes new revenues if Democrats agree to spending cuts. Staff aides readily identify former Reagan economic adviser Martin Feldstein and Fed Chairman-designate Alan Greenspan as Bush soulmates on economics, indicating that tax increases are not out of the question.

LAXALT, the presumptive guardian of Reaganite orthodoxy, said in an interview that "it will be almost suicidal if you distance yourself from the president on tax policy," but Dole is showing the temerity at least to approach the subject. For him, "the biggest single problem in America is the federal deficit," and he tells audiences that one of the major moments of his career was engineering the 1985 Senate vote to eliminate 14 federal programs and freeze every cost-of-living adjustment, including Social Security.

But he indicated that he wouldn't stop with spending cuts to get the deficit down. "If you're closing loopholes," he said, "you are not increasing taxes. 'Raising taxes' means raising rates or enacting new taxes, and nobody is for that except Jim Wright. Even the president put revenues in his budget, though. I don't think you can be a responsible candidate and say that revenues are off the table. I am not advocating this, but we could end up with an oil import fee and that wouldn't be all bad. Or paying more at the pump."

Dole clearly hopes the grand compromise will occur this year."I could get hit over the head," he said, "but I think you have to be responsible around this place sometimes. I'm not advocating taxes, but if you're in the room with the Democrats and the president, you shouldn't not act because you're running for president."

BEING IN THE room with the president—or as the president—seems to be the fulfillment of Dole's life. He is no ideologist, but a natural deal-maker, the ultimate tactician and transactional politician. If you talk to him about issues as such—say, about European security or deterrence—he practically wilts with boredom. But bring up an issue about which there's a current fight or that will be crucial politically—say, farm policy or trade legislation—and then he engages.

It is his acumen as a bargainer, not a strategist, that Dole is selling on the stump. "You need to ask yourself," he says, " 'Who do I want seated across from Mr. Gorbachev when Ronald Reagan is gone? Who do I want making the hard decisions when it comes to spending restraint? Who do I want dealing with the Congress? Who has been dealing with the Congress?' " His campaign manager, Robert Ellsworth, says that "of all the candidates, Dole will be the toughest, the smartest, and the fastest. He will be able to pick Gorbachev's pocket." Like Bush, Dole favors SDI research funding, but no swift deployment decision. "I'm not sure what's there to deploy," he said. Asked to name his foreign policy advisers, he lists Henry Kissinger and other worthies of the Ford era, including Brent Scowcroft and William Hyland.

Ellsworth thinks Dole's toughness would also enable him to get Japan to pay the United States for Persian Gulf protection, and to stimulate its economy in return for U.S. efforts to stop the plunge of the dollar. Dole is no free trade ideologue like Kemp or du Pont; he backs Democrat Lloyd Bentsen's bill to force the administration to get tougher on Japan. Even though the deficit is his major preoccupation, he's also been the sponsor of legislation that has catapulted the cost of the farm program from $4 billion to $26 billion since 1981. He claims this was a "transitional" program. "I don't disagree that we should phase out farm subsidies if other countries do," but "on ag, the question is, are the farmers going to make it?"

From his own life's experience with a war-shattered arm, and from political sensitivity, Dole has a record of

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compassion for the handicapped, the poor, and other unfortunates. He was a major sponsor of food stamps for the poor, which also helped farmers. While other Republicans are calling for mandatory AIDS testing, Dole voted against an amendment sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms that would have required tests for couples seeking marriage licenses. "What happens when a young couple registers a false positive?" Dole asked. On the other hand, Dole joined other candidates in dropping out as sponsor of a testimonial dinner for Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, who's under attack from the rabid right for opposing mandatory testing and advocating sex education. Bush was the lone candidate with the courage to stand with Koop.

When Dole seeks to distinguish himself from Bush, it's on the question of "being on the firing line" in Congress, making decisions on how to vote, as opposed to Bush's making speeches. Bush rarely deigns to talk about other candidates. Instead, he emphasizes his own breadth of executive experience. These two may be able to find issues to fight about when they formally announce their candidacies and come out with detailed agendas this fall, but neither is advocating a major departure from classic Republicanism.

KEMP, du Pont, and Robertson are different. Robertson is the one candidate openly defending President Reagan's Iranamok actions. "The scandal," he said, "is that the Democratic Congress and the press do not want to lift one finger to lift the yoke of tyranny from a country in our hemisphere." On other issues, Robertson is predictably hard right, advocating as a "long-range policy" the "elimination of Communist tyranny from every nation on earth, including the Soviet Union," further weakening of the role of government, controls on "profligate spending" without raising taxes, making abortion illegal, and (he's a little late on this) getting phonics back into first grade. Robertson is having difficulty keeping his Christian Broadcast Network solvent since the PTL scandal, so it's difficult to see him prospering as a candidate.

Nor has Kemp or du Pont yet achieved lift-off, and that's unfortunate, because each is advocating proposals that merit attention and debate. Du Pont says that he and Kemp represent the generational transition that the Democrats have already passed through. Kemp says that what separates him from the others is that he is a supply-sider and they are "fiscalists."

Kemp is the exuberant advocate of free enterprise and growth for everyone all over the world—full employment without inflation to be accomplished by replacing the current monetary system of floating currency values with a system that stabilizes the value of the dollar by pegging it to either gold or to a collection of other commodities. If currency values do not fluctuate wildly, he says, neither will interest rates, and low interest rates will mean employment, prosperity, and a better life for everyone, including the poor. Kemp claims his program can make the Republicans the nation's majority party by attracting blacks, working families, and young people to its promise of opportunity, jobs, and upward mobility.

According to Kemp, all of the world's current economic problems—the budget deficit, Third World debt, recession in foreign economies, and the U.S. farm crisis—are traceable to unstable currency values, high interest rates, and low growth. So he is for a lid on federal spending to help close the deficit, but not for deep cuts (especially not in Social Security), and is absolutely against any increase in taxes. "We must assist farm families whipsawed by the inflation/deflation cycles of the last decade," he says. "We must give our farms and factories a stable dollar, low long-term interest rates, a chance to work out from under their debts, and new markets for their products." If interest rates fall, he says, foreign economies can grow and buy U.S. products, lowering the trade deficit. He is dead against protectionist trade legislation. If interest rates on houses can fall from ten percent to five percent, the U.S. economy can achieve full capacity and young people will vote Republican.

EVEN THOUGH Kemp managed to convince Republicans and finally Congress to adopt his two other big supply-side ideas—deep cuts in marginal tax rates and tax reforms that closed loopholes and dropped millions of poorer families from the tax rolls—he is somehow unable to get this one over. When Kemp is asked "Where's the beef?" the answer comes out sounding like mystery meat. That's partly because the conventional wisdom among mainstream economists, the press, and the political community is that America's economic problems are fiscal, not monetary, and that what ails the world is America's budget deficit. To get his vision across, Kemp needs to turn his campaign into an economics class, but every time he tries, he gets press notices that say he's boring people and his staff orders him to get back to fiery generalities.

It's a no-win situation for Kemp, and the body politic is missing out on one satisfaction or another. If monetary reform can truly unleash the world economy, it would be crazy not to adopt it as national policy. On the other hand, if supply-sidism is merely a new recipe for a free lunch, people ought to have the intellectual satisfaction of seeing it exploded once and for all in debate, and laid to rest. Kemp claims, for example, that in all the years that the dollar was pegged to gold, interest rates stayed below three percent. Yet in all those years the United States experienced repeated panics and depressions. Furthermore, farmers, other debtors, and political populists always regarded hard money as the rich creditors' device to keep them poor. Kemp needs to respond to those objections, and to the practical question of how one gets other nations to agree to return to a system of fixed exchange rates and how one would enforce it.

In contrast to Kemp's theoretical notions, du Pont has a more accessible set of concrete radical proposals that also deserve more attention than they are getting. "Dole and Bush talk about fixing things at the margins," du Pont says. "I'm talking about big changes." For example, he

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calls for eliminating welfare for the able-bodied poor, and seeing to it that everyone works and gets day-care assistance, if necessary, to enable them to get a job. He favors phasing out farm subsidies completely in five years, establishing a voucher system to let parents choose which school their children will attend, and setting up a voluntary alternative to Social Security. He claims that all these programs will save enough money in the long run to cut the deficit—he'd also eliminate the MX missile, but build SDI and Midgetman—and he's pledged not to raise taxes. He favors drug testing for all teenagers, and denying driver's licenses to those who don't pass. The idea is popular with parents, he says.

Unless Kemp or du Pont begins to rise in the polls or the press finds some other reason to get interested in their ideas, it looks as though the Republican Party will switch back to pre-Reagan policies centered on the principles of fiscal restraint at home and containment of communism abroad. That could produce a victory in 1988 if the country is tired of policy adventurism and is merely looking for competence and steadiness, but it's hard to see that it will give the Republicans majority status. The great Reagan opportunity was to throw away the old suit and come out for growth and opportunity domestically and the spread of democracy overseas. It was an inspiring message and it won two landslide elections, but it did not make the Republicans the permanent majority party either, and now it has raised doubts about whether it was wise.

Everyone in the Republican field claims to be a Reaganite, but everyone has a line in his speech about how "the revolution is unfinished," "we've come a long way, but we have a long way to go," or "to enter the future, you have to leave some things behind." If the Republicans look for their future in the past or in tinkering with the status quo, that will give Democrats the opportunity to be the party of hope and inspiration.

Can Congress reform the White House?

THE WELFARE STRAIT

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

AFTER TWO DECADES of ideological wrangling, a remarkable consensus on welfare reform is said to be emerging. Most liberals and conservatives now agree that the welfare system encourages dependency, promotes the breakup of families, legitimizes a culture of illegitimacy, and offers too few opportunities to escape from poverty. Virtually all liberals now concur that many, perhaps most, welfare recipients can and should—and often want to—work. Liberals, abetted by their feminist allies, are also willing to have the State fiercely pursue absent fathers for child support.

Many conservatives, for their part, concede that benefits for those "truly needy" are indecently low; that some entitlements must be broadened, paradoxically, to reduce dependency (for example, allowing benefits when the father is in the home); and that although the welfare-to-work shift can save public money in the long run, it will necessarily increase transitional costs in the short run, for day care, health insurance, and compensatory education, to mention just three. Both liberals and conservatives want to modify tax credit and "disregard" formulas so that an additional dollar earned does not mean a dollar of benefits lost. Both want work requirements to be targeted on "recidivists"—the relatively small fraction of AFDC recipients who stay on welfare for the long term and cost the most. Both acknowledge the perversity of a system that can give some people more money for staying on welfare than working while leaving those who go off welfare with less money.

One can find variations on these common themes in a small library of recent reports representing diverse points on the political spectrum: "One Child in Four" by the American Public Welfare Association; "Ladders Out of Poverty" by the project on the Welfare of Families (co-chaired by Bruce Babbitt); "A New Social Contract" by a task force appointed by Mario Cuomo; "A Community of Self-Reliance" by the American Enterprise Institute; and the forthcoming "Beyond Welfarism" by the Heritage Foundation. Indeed, in these works liberals often make conservative arguments and conservatives voice liberal ones. "Increase the federal and state resources spent on locating absentee parents," declares the report to Governor Cuomo. "Work requirements will not provide a panacea for dependency," cautions Heritage. "A powerful new consensus has taken shape," concludes AEI's Working Seminar on Family and American Welfare Policy, whose members ranged from Charles Murray on the right to Barbara Blum, former president of the American Public Welfare Association, on the center-left.

So we ought to be on the verge of a historic bipartisan breakthrough. But it is very likely that 1987 and '88 will pass with no welfare reform, thanks to the Reagan White

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House. The conspicuous dissenter in the new consensus is Charles Hobbs Jr., the White House point man on welfare reform. Hobbs's December 1986 White House report, "Up from Dependency" (a cute play on William F. Buckley's *Up from Liberalism*, which is itself a play on Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*), poses two basic obstacles: ideology and money. The White House's ideological goal is to get the federal government out of the welfare business as quickly as possible. Instead the administration wants broad waiver authority to let states reallocate present social outlays, in the process dropping federal safety-net entitlements and leaving states holding the fiscal bag for recessions. According to a White House memo circulated to legislative allies, any welfare reform that increases spending, sets additional federal standards, or fails to give the administration virtually unlimited authority to allow state experiments is unacceptable. Any further transitional outlays for health insurance and day care, much less job training or higher basic AFDC benefits, would invite a presidential veto.

As congressional drafters of reform legislation have informally felt out possible compromises to secure White House support, Reagan officials have simply refused to bargain at all, and have pressed congressional Republicans not to back any legislation that increases costs or broadens mandates. Even the conservative sponsors of the AEI report, "A Community of Self-Reliance," who include former administration officials, have been unable to get the White House to play. Unless chief of staff Howard Baker, once a Senate supporter of welfare reform, chooses to assert himself and pull rank on Hobbs (which will be difficult, since Hobbs is a protégé of Attorney General Ed Meese's), any bill that passes Congress is likely to be bitterly fought by the White House.

EVERYONE WHO IS serious about welfare reform has bumped up against several interrelated conundrums. The first is the matter of who takes care of the kids. Some states now impose work-or-training requirements on mothers of children as young as six months. Although some conservatives argue that if you are sufficiently coercive about work, neighbors and relatives will somehow emerge to watch the children, there are already too many latchkey children in America's ghettos. Massachusetts, which has the most ambitious welfare-to-work transition program, puts over half of its new state "employment-training" money into day care. Even if tough workfare requirements were to reduce gradually the prevalence of illegitimate motherhood, someone must care for the children already born. In a national welfare-to-work effort, subsidizing even a transitional day-care entitlement of 12 months post-AFDC would easily cost a billion dollars annually.

A second and related general dilemma is insufficient income. AFDC benefits have been falling further and further behind living costs. The purchasing power of an average welfare check is about 33 percent below what it was in 1970. In several states AFDC levels are under $200 a month for a family of four. AFDC benefits plus food stamps together create a family income package that averages 74 percent of the poverty level. Bringing up the basic welfare standard to even 15 percent of median family income, which congressional Democrats propose, would require 18 states to raise their current payment levels.

A key tenet of the bipartisan reform consensus is that shifting people off welfare and into employment should not worsen their lives. But moving a mother from AFDC into a minimum-wage job, at 35 hours a week, produces a yearly gross income of only $6,000. Since most such jobs provide no health insurance, the work option imposes new costs—medical coverage, day care, and the costs of getting to work. Without federal transition subsidies, it leaves the family with a net income below the welfare package in most large states.

THIRD, health insurance poses a special problem. Paul Starr calls the creation of a separate means-tested Medicaid program "the original sin" of health policy in America. Lacking votes for comprehensive national health insurance, Congress in 1965 designed Medicaid as a program for the medically needy, including the working poor. But eligibility has been narrowed, and in most states now Medicaid is a perquisite of being on welfare; if you go off AFDC to take a job you lose your Medicaid. Today 23 million people qualify for Medicaid. Another 37 million people, most of them the "working poor" and their families, have no health insurance at all. To buy good health insurance for a family of four costs $150-$200 a month. According to the Congressional Budget Office, about half the families that go off AFDC to take jobs get no health insurance. In some places, such as Dallas, as few as 17 percent get employer-provided health coverage. CBO reports: "Even those covered by private health insurance are likely to incur greater costs" because the typical stripped-down policy has higher deductibles and co-insurance costs, and some illnesses are not covered because of "pre-existing condition" clauses. Until there is some form of universal health insurance, the Medicaid problem will either necessitate transitional subsidies or exact a punitive form of tax on welfare recipients who take jobs.

Fourth, virtually all the studies agree that the widespread requirement restricting AFDC to one-parent households has had the effect of breaking up families. In most states a man who takes responsibility for the children disqualifies his mate from collecting benefits. A minority of states currently do extend AFDC to families with unemployed fathers. Every welfare reform blueprint, from Heritage to AEI to Children's Defense Fund, argues that a reformed welfare system should stop driving away fathers—every blueprint, that is, except the White House plan. Attorney General Meese, in his capacity as domestic policy czar, has said that any program that extended benefits to fathers would be vetoed.

A related issue is child support. Liberals and conserva-

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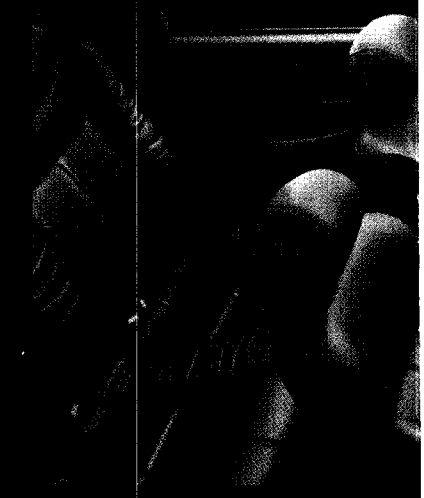

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tives both recognize that absent fathers should be required to support their kids. Although present law compels states to go after fathers, enforcement is spotty. About 58 percent of single or divorced mothers have a court award for child support, but only about 40 percent actually get it, and half of those get less than the amount they were awarded. Although in very poor communities it is often presumed that the father is either unknown or long gone, a recent ethnographic study sponsored by the Vera Foundation, "Teen Fathers in the Inner City" by Mercer Sullivan, suggests that contacts between unmarried fathers, their own families of origin, and their children are far more widespread than is often supposed. Paternity is frequently acknowledged; money, though sporadically, often flows.

A new approach in Wisconsin holds great promise for universalizing the child support obligation beyond the AFDC population, bringing all children under the same umbrella. A Wisconsin law that takes effect in July (beginning experimentally in several counties) mandates a broad requirement that strictly enforces child support on all absent fathers—rich divorced ones, as well as unemployed fathers of AFDC children. It creates a minimum standard of $3,000 per child, and to the extent that the father's income plus the mother's can't provide it, the state does. This has the splendid liberal byproduct of de-stigmatizing AFDC children, and it serves the conservative goal of enforcing paternal responsibility.

FURTHER, there is the problem of job qualification. Some fraction of the welfare population is not competent to work. (I have less sympathy for this argument than some of my liberal friends; a lot of very poor people with very low skills nonetheless do choose to take fairly menial jobs rather than go on the dole.) Presumably, it doesn't take advanced skills to run a checkout counter at McDonald's. But it does take basic literacy and a sufficient degree of personal organization to get to a job on time, ready to work. California's current version of workfare, called GAIN, tests the educational level of every AFDC recipient; fully 57 percent require remedial basic education. An extensive evaluation of state workfare programs by the Manpower Development Research Corporation found that mandatory-work requirements, on average, increase the proportion of AFDC people who take jobs by only three percent to eight percent. Moreover, because of the transitional costs, the AFDC savings were smaller than the earnings gained, in all but one state. Virtually all of the recent studies urge that work requirements be targeted on the hardest core, long-term welfare recipients. But making that population employable will take money. A goal of a reformed welfare system should be not just to make the very poor sing for their supper, but to improve their life prospects.

Finally, there is the long-standing issue of whether, and to what degree, the availability of the welfare life is responsible for increasing teenage parenthood among underclass youths. Recent research by social scientists William Julius Wilson, David Ellwood, and Mary Jo Bane, among others, qualifies that claim in several respects. First, as Ellwood observes, AFDC levels for a family of four vary from just over $100 a month in Mississippi to nearly $600 a month in California. Yet among black families the incidence of illegitimacy fluctuates between 40 percent and 65 percent in different parts of the country, and does not correlate at all with the size of the welfare check. Some low-welfare states have very high illegitimacy rates, and vice versa. Secondly, says Ellwood, during the 1970s, the birthrate to unmarried black women fell by 13 percent, while for white women it rose by 27 percent. Something other than the culture of welfare dependency must have been at work.

According to Wilson, a more convincing factor has been what he calls the diminishing pool of "marriageable" black males—"a long-term decline in the proportion of black men, and particularly young black men, who are in a position to support a family." Wilson reports that the ratio of employed civilian non-white men aged 20-24 to women of the same age and race has declined from about 70 percent in the mid-1960s to below 50 percent today, while the ratio among whites has actually risen slightly. A recent study by the Children's Defense Fund tracks the recent decline in the employment and earnings of young men, young black men in particular. Real earnings of men aged 20-24 fell by 30 percent between 1973 and 1984. Young black high school graduates, on average, suffered a 52 percent drop in their earnings, faring only slightly better than black dropouts. In real, inflation-adjusted dollars, the mean annual income of a black man, aged 20-24, dropped from $11,444 in 1973 to $5,571 in 1984—from well above to well below the poverty level for a family of three. If we want more intact families, we need more young men who earn a decent living.

Obviously, the route away from the welfare subculture has everything to do with work and the rewards of work, but in ways more complicated than many "workfare" advocates might first suggest. If liberals have learned to appreciate the importance of work, conservatives have come to appreciate the complexities: the need to employ not just mothers but fathers, and the need to supplement low incomes. Everybody favors some form of transitional work requirement, but it is just not practical to sound a bell and announce that henceforth, after a cutoff date, everyone who fails to show up at a WPA-type shape-up will simply starve.

THERE ARE solutions to all of these conundrums, but they cost some money. Not astronomical amounts, mind you. A radically better system could probably be put in place for $2 billion-$3 billion a year, net. And since it would gradually wean a lot of people from dependence, fiscal savings would materialize over time. Senator Pat Moynihan, who has been studying the welfare dilemma for better than a quarter century, as an academic, as a young assistant labor secretary under Nixon, and as the senior senator from New York, has an approach that promises a genuine breakthrough.

"Welfare cannot be reformed, it should be replaced," says he. "A program that was designed to pay mothers to stay at home with their children cannot succeed when we

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now observe most mothers going out to work." In a bill being circulated in draft, Moynihan proposes a three-layer cake, to replace the present AFDC program and reduce poverty at the same time. The first layer would be work income: all able-bodied welfare recipients with children over three would have to work, or take job training in preparation for work. The requirements would be applied most intensively to long-term welfare recipients. The second layer would be support payments from absent fathers, with a much more systematic effort to identify paternity and enforce collection, perhaps using the tax system. The final layer would be subsidies from a new Child Support Supplement, to the extent that the first two sources failed to provide a minimally adequate income.

The key difference between this approach and AFDC is that under AFDC, the government pays those who don't work; under this approach, the government would supplement the earnings of those who do work, and would go to greater lengths to "insist that all parents support their children," as Moynihan puts it. "Thirty years ago," says Erika Baum, Moynihan's welfare assistant, "it was punitive to single out AFDC mothers to work. Today mothers generally work. If the mother works, and the income from work and from child support payments is inadequate, then government can add the last piece. The present AFDC program is backward. It starts with the benefit. We want to reverse that."

BUT EVEN THE Moynihan approach—which allows the states great flexibility in designing specifics, assumes fairly meager benefit levels, and offers only brief transitional Medicaid and child care subsidies—would cost between $1 billion and $2 billion a year in additional federal funding. This approach serves the conservative goals of discouraging frivolous fatherhood, requiring that mothers work, and eliminating the present incentives to break up intact families. But it also broadens federal responsibility, and the White House wants none of it. Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, the original leading prospect to be Republican co-sponsor, is said to be torn between his party loyalty and his desire to set an independent course from Reagan and Vice President Bush, his rival for the Republican nomination. Moynihan reportedly hopes to go over the heads of the White House ultras and enlist Howard Baker and the president himself.

A bill reported by the House Ways and Means Committee offers a similar approach. Here the first legislative obstacle was sticker-shock. The original subcommittee proposal, with higher AFDC minimums, day care, Medicaid, and job training, cost over $3 billion a year in the "out years" after 1990. At each stage, the cost has been pared back in the hope of picking up bipartisan support. But the real obstacle is the White House. Despite another round of trimming in last week's markup, eliminating mandated minimum AFDC levels and cutting the net cost to about a billion dollars a year, the bill reported by committee picked up no Republican co-sponsors.

In partisan terms, Democratic welfare reform advocates are in a tactical quandary. If they give the White House the waiver authority that Charles Hobbs wants, they essentially put the federal government out of the safety-net business, and deprive states of the resources to do welfare reform properly. If, alternatively, they decide to brave a veto and pass something like the Moynihan bill or the House Ways and Means bill, the resources may well be too meager, and Democrats could still find themselves as the party that wants to spend more money "on welfare" without solving the problem. The irony is that the new consensus approach has a lot of tacit Republican support and holds real promise for moving away from welfare dependency.

THUS FAR the White House line has placed its own "new federalism" agenda of weakened federal responsibility for the poor far ahead of welfare reform. The White House blueprint "Up from Dependency" is a hodgepodge of homilies about self-sufficiency, and outright intellectual dishonesty. In making the case that present federal transfers to the poor should be "cashed out" in favor of state programs, the report grossly inflates what it counts as anti-poverty transfers, counting, for example, tens of billions of dollars spent to keep old people in nursing homes, as well as college loan and grant payments, neither of which could readily be traded for higher welfare benefits.

The report makes two basic arguments against the current welfare system. First, it says, the system fails the poor, because it spends too much money on the non-poor. Second, it argues, the system fosters dependency by making it more attractive to stay on welfare. But obviously, what makes it attractive is the fact that you lose such benefits as Medicaid if you go off welfare. The only way to make welfare less attractive is by allowing some partial benefits to keep flowing to the near poor; you can't withdraw every nickel as soon as they increase their earnings. Either the first argument or the second could be right, but logically both can't be right simultaneously. The White House, perversely, has also eliminated federal Work Incentive (WIN) money from the 1988 budget; WIN substantially finances the state workfare programs that the administration commends.

Congress is closer today to real welfare reform than it has been for two decades. Despite the Democratic majority in Congress, the consensus reform view has been substantially influenced by conservative scholarship. But the idea that we can shift from a welfare state to a work economy on the cheap is a fantasy. That, despite the consensus, is why welfare reform is very likely to land on the desk of the next president. To get serious about welfare reform, Democrats—and Republicans—will have to confront an old nemesis: taxing and spending. For the better part of a decade social problems have accumulated, and decent attempts to remedy them have been crushed by the same fiscal and ideological constraints imposed by the administration. An increment of $2 billion-$3 billion would be a small price to pay for a bipartisan solution to the welfare knot. It is one more reason for wishing a speedy departure to the Reagan presidency. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Strong Old-Style; Weak Chic

Jean de Florette
(Orion Classics)

Summer Night
(New Line)

Marcel Pagnol (1895-1974) was a phenomenon. Born and raised near Marseilles, he began teaching and writing there, then moved to Paris and, with *Merchants of Glory* and *Topaze*, became a successful playwright. When sound was added to film, he was fascinated by the expanded medium; he became a film writer, producer, and director (*The Baker's Wife*, *The Welldigger's Daughter*, *Harvest*, the trilogy of *Marius*, *Fanny*, and *César*). In order to return to his native region and to celebrate it on film, he built a studio in Marseilles where he recruited and advanced local performers, including Raimu and Fernandel. Pagnol's conversion to film (although he wrote some subsequent plays) raised eyebrows among theater people, while film people frequently called his work "canned theater." Nonetheless, in 1946 he became the first filmmaker to be elected to the Académie Française. In 1957 Truffaut wrote: "Hasn't anyone noticed that Italian neorealism . . . is a direct descendant . . . of the filmed theater pieces of Marcel Pagnol?"—an opinion seconded by De Sica and Rossellini.

Pagnol was also a writer of prose, fiction and non-fiction. A two-volume novel of his later years, *The Water of the Hills*, came to being through his film work. In 1952 he made a film called *Manon of the Springs*, which dealt with farmers of the south. Some have called *Manon* a masterpiece, but it was not a success. Ten years later Pagnol transmuted the material of the film into his double-decker novel; the first volume was called *Jean de Florette*, the second *Manon of the Springs*. Both of those novels have now been made into films by Claude Berri. The first has just arrived; the second will be here at the end of the year.

Jean de Florette was adapted by Berri and Gerard Brach, and anyone who doesn't know the original (I don't) can still discern very early that they have tried to retain the feeling of a chronicle. The tempo is deliberate without dragging; the scope is wide and includes the landscape as one of the characters; the story veers away from "scenes" toward the portrayal of human lives in seasonal cycles. Beyond that, it has the true hallmark of the large-scale, realistic novel: small events bespeak huge, elemental factors. In this last aspect, *Jean de Florette* succeeds particularly: before the two-hour film is halfway along, we know that the farmers' grubby plottings are meant to epitomize some dark secrets in mankind generally.

The time is early in the century. The farmers use mules for work and transport, though we see an old bus and a doctor on a motorcycle. Yves Montand, with grizzled moustache and thick corduroy jacket, plays a well-to-do, hard-bitten farmer who wants his nephew, his only relative, to acquire some nearby land. That land contains a spring essential to the nephew's plans. But in a quarrel with the owner of the land, who refuses to sell, Montand kills him and makes it look like an accident. He and his nephew then plug up and hide the spring to keep the price of the land down.

The land is inherited by a city man, a hunchback called Jean de Florette, played by Gérard Depardieu, who arrives with his wife and a small daughter named Manon. To Montand's surprise, Depardieu is there to stay, to farm. All Depardieu's plans depend on plentiful water; and all eventually fail because Montand and his nephew never disclose the spring. Depardieu, his wife, and his child keep struggling until finally he is killed dynamiting rocks to find water. At last Montand and nephew are able to buy the land they have wanted from the start. As they unplug the invaluable spring, the child Manon, who is about to depart with her mother, accidentally sees them—sees that all along there was water available that would have saved her father's fortunes and life. There ends Part One, whetting our appetite for Part Two, *Manon of the Springs*.

I don't know of another film work planned in two parts—as distinct from films that acquire sequels because they turn out to be hits—since Jan Troell's *The Emigrants* (1972) and *The New Land* (1973), which were made from a long novel by Vilhelm Moberg. It's a cozy, pillowed sensation to know that all of the Pagnol story is coming our way, even though we have to wait until December for the rest. Those feelings of settling in, of anticipation, are the best compliments to be paid Berri. For most of his directing career, he has been a syrup-monger. Here he treats strong material with respect and evenness. Very infrequently there's an intrusion of "style"—e.g., a face seen fortuitously through a fissure in a wall. Mostly Berri seems to have modeled his approach on Pagnol's own film directing: no big close-ups, no odd angles, spare use of a moving camera, no obvious editing maneuvers. The camera is an old-fashioned storyteller, keeping us interested through its concern with people.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Life as a Dog. Unusually good, unsentimental yet feeling account of a 12-year-old Swedish boy's education for life through a couple of deaths. (Reviewed 5/25/87)

Roxanne. Steve Martin (yes, Steve Martin) winning and funny in his own updating of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Daryl Hannah romantic as Roxanne. Fred Schepisi directs wittily. (6/29/87)

Tampopo. Food and sex, rather reliable appetites, motivate this Japanese romp. The entertainment centers on a young widow and the truck driver who helps her make a go of her noodle shop. (6/1/87)

The Untouchables. Chicago, 1930 again, the Capone-Ness story again, but gorgeously handled by Brian De Palma, aided by David Mamet's script and, especially, Robert De Niro as Scarface Al. (6/22/87)

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It was Berri's own project to make these two films—an admirable one (so far at least). I have only two questions. Why didn't the man who saw Montand and nephew plugging up the spring tell Depardieu? Why did Berri use that blatant, overloaded score based on themes from Verdi's *Force of Destiny*? It's much too lush for this picture.

For the cast, nothing but praise. Montand, who was raised in Marseilles, says (I can't judge) that he slipped back easily into the regional accent; he certainly slipped into the manner and port of the canny old farmer. His hands move like those of a man who has labored with them. His face is a gallery of various kinds of peasant shrewdness. The nephew, played by Daniel Auteuil, who looks like a crazed Roddy McDowall, supplies the needed tenacity and neurosis. As the hunchbacked heir, Depardieu gives, for him, a reticent performance—that is, the energy is kept to only a little above a normal level. His screen wife is his own wife, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Manon is Ernestine Mazurowna; both have charm.

Another mark of the film's success: as it progresses, we soon forget that Montand and Auteuil are a murderer and his accomplice. Their crime is absorbed into the evolving patterns of lives that are lived close to the soil, of primary-color antagonisms and desires. Not once in the film is there a tremor in Montand or his nephew because of the murder or the cruelties they are causing Depardieu to suffer. After the hunchback dies, the nephew weeps and his uncle reproves him. "It's not me who is crying," says Auteuil. "It's my eyes that are crying."

Lina Wertmüller has fallen so far that a brief note will suffice for her latest film, *Summer Night*. It's slightly reminiscent of her earlier film *Swept Away*: the central couple are an elegant upper-class woman and an inelegant lower-class man. Here the man is a bandit kidnapped by the woman so that his companions will ransom him with the money that he has extorted by kidnapping the rich. While he is in her power, she finds herself in his power—through sex.

The sex, like the whole film, is protracted and mannered. (As in soft-core porn, the love-makers never completely undress.) The visual style is high caloric and pointless. Wertmüller began as an offshoot of the later Fellini, hunting social inequities with polished weapons. Now the weapons are even more polished, or seem so because their glitter is

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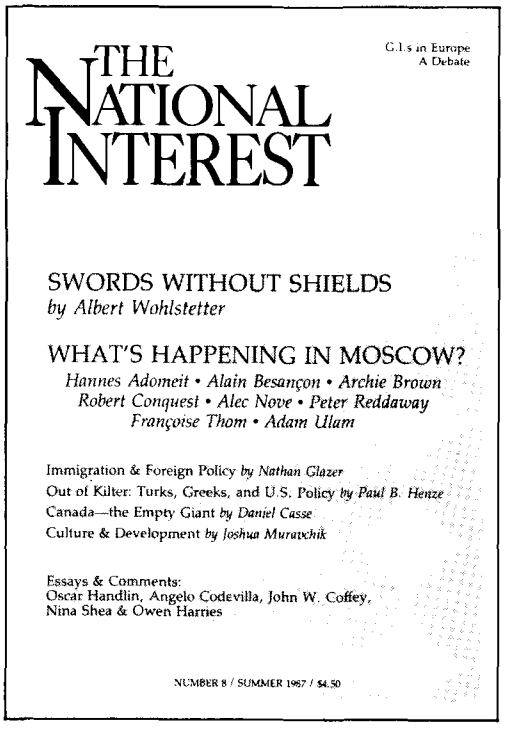

Albert Wohlstetter: "Arms control has become a means for 'managing'—that is, trying to appease—the utopian, apocalyptic, antinuclear movements."

Robert Conquest: "The Soviet Union is in something like the state of France in the 1780s. Then, as now, the system had lost the support of the thinking classes."

Adam Ulam: "Gorbachev and his partisans evidently believe that their system has a built-in set of brakes...for an outside observer such confidence may appear excessive."

Alec Nove: "There is not much we can do to help or hinder. But we should not hinder; Gorbachev is the best general secretary we have got or are likely to have."

Nathan Glazer: "Even if we insist that American immigration policy is our concern alone, other countries can make that claim a mockery."

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supposed to compensate for the shriveling of her social aims. Mariangela Melato, more smoothly luscious than ever, mutters and prattles on the sound track. That splendid actor Michele Placido, seen in *Dear Maestro* and as Caliban in Giorgio Strehler's superb production of *The Tempest*, plays the captured bandit as well as permitted. Wertmüller doesn't even make the most of Placido's presence, because she's so busy with her *Harper's Bazaar* cinematics.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Vaudeville and Radio

Milton Berle and Bill Irwin recently had a mild confrontation over the nature of comedy that had the ring of cultural commentary. In the course of making distinctions between the comic and the comedian, Berle, an old vaudevillian of the classic school, turned to Irwin, a rising young mime artist, and asked how he would define his own craft. "I'm a clown," replied Irwin. Berle acted as if he had been stung by a gnat. "Don't say that!" he said, and turned away.

The way Berle reacted to Irwin's identifying himself with an honorable circus tradition was somewhat testy, but I think I know what was bothering him. It bothers me too. The current movement called "The New Vaudeville"—of which Irwin is a founding member—really belongs more to the tent than to the theater, being a source of easily digestible entertainment that leaves no aftertaste. Like his brothers in this movement, Irwin is an affable and charming individual, but his performance rarely probes the inner spaces of human character or the membrane of social circumstance. To see him emerge from a box or catapult himself offstage or assume a variety of shapes is to be in the presence of technical wizardry rather than dramatic insight. The clown appeals to the child in us through artful and zany antics; confronting us with the absurdity of human behavior, the comedian delights the child, but not at the cost of sedating the adult. All great comedy finds its basis in pain; it is tragedy's kissing cousin. Great clowning, even the mournful tradition of Emmett Kelly, is essentially an art of drollery. Comedy looks out on the world, clowning turns back on the performer, which is why the related act of mime—unless performed by supreme artists, Chaplin or Barrault—provokes violent impulses in comic actors: Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* knocking a performing mime off his pins in the park; Harvey Korman on "The Carol Burnett Show" assassinating the pasty-faced mutes who wander serially into his apartment.

I was half inclined to reach for firearms myself recently when watching a New Vaudeville version of *The Comedy of Errors* at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre. The artistic director of Lincoln Center, Gregory Mosher, helped create this show some years ago when he was running the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. It must have seemed a good idea then to entrust this early Shakespeare farce to the manic talents of a vaudeville juggling troupe called The Flying Karamazov Brothers and a mime known as Avner the Eccentric. The play, based on Plautus's *Menaechmi*, was hardly a piece of scripture, and the artists involved were attracting substantial interest from the public and the critics. How better to unite the traditions of classic theater with the media-made popularity of the New Vaudeville?

The results are winning for a while, and I should report that the audience I was with seemed to enjoy itself immensely. But after 40 or so minutes of miming, tightrope walking, fire eating, belly and tap dancing, pratfalling, trapeze acts, acrobatics, knife- and pie- and tomato-throwing, drag acts, brass and woodwind interludes, and, pre-eminently, juggling I found myself longing for even the most conventionalized presentation of this play. It's not the irreverence that's irritating, but rather the remorselessness of the irreverence, not to mention the air of self-congratulation that accompanies every topical reference, every piece of vaudeville shtick. "In Ephesus," says one of the characters (no doubt inspired by Antipholus's remark about "nimble jugglers that deceive the eye"), "you juggle or die"; but in this Ephesus you can drop dead from the juggling. What wears you down finally is the uninterrupted physicality of the proceedings, and the vainglorious way the performers assume that the author (represented on stage by a bearded actor in a ruff) must be turning in his grave.

About the only thing I learned from this *Comedy of Errors* is that even minor Shakespeare must be acted: the major limitation of the evening is the absence of performers who can speak the lines. Sophie Hayden plays Adriana with spunky energy (she also twirls a mean baton); Gina Leishman has moments as her sister, Luciana; and Ethyl Eichelberger does outrageous transvestite turns ("God, it's great to be back from Betty Ford's") doubling as Luce and Emilia. But the others seem incapable of uttering a word without doing a pratfall or flipping plates. It's all rather like *Hellzapoppin* without the genius of Olson or Johnson, a marathon circus clown act without the respite of elephants and tigers. Yes, the production induces nostalgia for childhood—it seems, in fact, like another of those well-intentioned civic efforts to prove to school kids that Shakespeare can be painless—and doubtless many will find the evening entertaining in its good-natured way. But I hope I don't appear to be humor-impaired when I say that, like other manifestations of the New Vaudeville, this *Comedy of Errors* is essentially a yuppie phenomenon. It skirts the surface of experience, offering amusement without involvement, laughter without discovery, technique without depth; and the name of that game, my friends, is escapism.

Talk Radio at Joseph Papp's Public Theater is hardly escapist. It is one of a growing list of theater works (others are David Mamet's *Water Engine* and Richard Foreman's *Film Is Evil Radio Is Good*) that tap the radio medium as a source of social commentary and cultural revelation. Entirely composed of talk, denied any visual distractions, radio has the capacity to penetrate the secret corners of the national spirit, and *Talk Radio*, as written by Eric Bogosian after an idea by Tad Savinar, is a cruel probe into the dark corners of modern America. It is an effort to do for the stage in the '80s what Nathanael West did for the novel in the '40s—to give expression to the disfranchised, benighted, desperate millions who seek salvation in a world where God has been displaced by such as Jerry Falwell. Barry Champlain, a popular talk show figure on an all-talk station, moni-

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tors the calls of the sleepless booboisie, the frightened, demented, and suicidal, listening in a state of blank anomie before silencing their threats and complaints with a cutoff button or a vicious rejoinder. Chain-smoking, dissipated, deeply depressed himself, sinking further into hatred for his listeners and his own behavior, Champlain is sucked against his will into the swamps of human suffering—like West's Miss Lonelyhearts, a man poisoned by the misery of the world he lives off.

Champlain blows bored smoke rings while callers rave about pollution, transvestism, "the mess this country is in," our lack of patriotism. He listens to a pregnant girl trying to track down her lover, to a whacked-out druggie who claims to have killed his girlfriend with an overdose. An anti-Semite accuses him of being Jewish, another bigot calls him a homosexual. Champlain responds with icy sarcasm ("Are you on drugs or is this your naturally normal voice?"), when he is not flipping the cutoff button or taking breaks from the flow of venom and suffering in the calm trough of a commercial.

Somewhat gratuitous monologues by his producer, his assistant, and his researcher try to provide a motivating background for Champlain, though he is more interesting just behaving. An ex-actor, he first went into "subversive" radio having discovered that "talking is thinking out loud." He knew how to pull secrets out of people, and his producer—Dan Woodruf—learned how to market this gift to the networks. At the moment Woodruf is worried (so is the sponsor) that the felonious druggie who called—whom Barry has invited to join him in the studio—is going to create a scandal on the air. When the hophead arrives, giggling, shaking his legs, wired to the breaking point, Champlain eyes him wearily: "I sincerely hope you do not represent the future of this country." The kid is a fraud; he invented the entire murder story just to get on the air. Barry considers quitting, going back to Akron. Catatonic, he commits the one impermissible act of radio—silence. After 45 seconds of dead air, he admits to his listeners, "I guess we're stuck with each other," and signs off. The new host arrives for the next show—a female psychologist, a jaundiced version of Dr. Ruth, poised to offer solutions to sexual problems.

There isn't much story or character development in this piece, apart from

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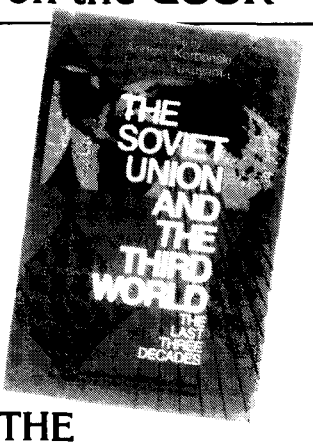

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Champlain sinking into his own self-disgust, but at times it cuts very deeply. Bogosian plays Champlain—his eyes hooded, his curly black hair bedizening his head like an Armenian Harpo Marx—with a ferocious intensity. He is an actor who suffers for his craft, and he is abetted by a very able cast, particularly Mark Metcalf as Woodruf and Michael Wincott as the druggie. Fredrick Zollo has contributed sharp, uncompromising direction, though allowing abstract projections to accompany the radio dialogue shows a certain distrust for the material. *Talk Radio* is engrossing enough without illustrations. In fact, the disembodied nature of our national poisons—the acid in the ether—is precisely its point. As for David Jenkins's glass and linoleum setting of the radio station, it provides a plush contrast to the rot and deterioration confirmed by the play.

HE'S THE ONE

Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913-1962 by Stephen E. Ambrose

(Simon and Schuster, 752 pp., $22.95)

The night of John F. Kennedy's inauguration, after the oratory about the torch being passed, the loser toured the mostly deserted Washington streets. Until the bewitching hour of midnight, Richard Nixon still commanded his official vice presidential car. He ordered his chauffeur at last to take him to the Capitol. He marched alone past the Senate chamber, down a corridor to the vast and empty Rotunda, and on to a balcony, where he gazed at the darkened horizon. Nixon had virtually willed himself to within a few thousand votes of the presidency. And in this portentous scene of departure, his will was almost palpable. Yet the story did not end here; his lonely leave-taking became the prelude to a return—and worse.

Stephen E. Ambrose's book is an old-fashioned sort of biography. The author, a historian at the University of New Orleans who has written the definitive two-volume biography of Eisenhower, seeks balance, not irony. Ambrose's facts are lined up in rows and made to march to a very measured judgment. His prudent interpretations do not stray from the accumulated details. There are no great themes, no theories of history, no analytical leaps. In short, Ambrose has written the standard, a middle point of reference, around which all Nixonia may be organized.

Ambrose's extension of the historian's empathy to his subject seems at first to make Nixon's motivation understandable. But the more we know, the more unknowable Nixon becomes. There is no searching point of view; and finally the professionally "balanced" approach to an unbalanced subject does not penetrate deep enough. Still, this sheer massing of material on Nixon cannot help but evoke a certain reaction. Ambrose's affectless prose is not without effect; this vanilla has an aftertaste.

The first of two volumes, the opening of an American tragedy, *Nixon* is utterly chilling in its inexorability. Even as we begin the first page the last terrible one is known. Nixon does not exactly drift toward his fate. Instead, his ambition builds into a juggernaut, driving him toward rule and ruin. Each of his passages was final, sealing him off from possibility. The more tightly Nixon coiled his ambition, the more he became entangled in forces outside himself. The biographer's piling up of facts seems almost heartless, because they are ultimately crushing; yet Ambrose's naturalistic style implicitly fits the amoral rise and fall of his subject. Richard Nixon's story belongs in Theodore Dreiser's world.

Nixon's trajectory has been described conventionally (and unconventionally in Garry Wills's *Nixon Agonistes*) as a parable of the Protestant ethic, according to which work and ambition produce virtue and success. Perversely, the worldly-wise Nixon twisted his success into failure: the self-made man unmade. *Nixon*, however, is at least as much about environment as it is about character, about a mechanical politician in a mechanistic universe, who was found by forces he eagerly rode.

Nixon, for his part, projected the impersonal as the enemy. Always he faced a faceless conspiracy that had to be brought under control. He was the individual against the crowd below and the elite above; the choice was always between order and chaos. Though his ascent to power was amazingly rapid—elected vice president at age 39—he believed he was constantly being thwarted. He sought to conquer a society with which he was radically at odds. And he never felt that he had arrived, that he could loosen his grip on himself. Thus his spirit was stunted by a fierce obsession with survival. "I had to win," he said, justifying his sordid first campaign. The situation was always desperate; he was always cornered by circumstance.

Nixon's most enduring piece of writing, *Six Crises*, about his struggle, is Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* with a paranoid subtext: half-banal, half-mad. Any self-revelation on Nixon's part was unintentional. He was certain that he risked destruction if he displayed authenticity; against his enemies, he carried insincerity as a shield. The political obliterated the personal. "In my job," he said in 1959 to Joseph Alsop, "you can't enjoy the luxury of intimate personal friendships. You can't confide absolutely in anyone. You can't talk too much about your personal plans, your personal feelings."

Nixon grew up, surrounded by a loving family, in a religious Quaker community. Like many Quakers, he was bred to be reserved in private but confident in public. The great mystery is his inability as an adult to trust. There is "nothing" to explain it, according to Ambrose. The death of his little brother, Arthur, made him strive harder to please his parents. He recited poetry, played the piano, debated like a champion, and rose every morning at 4 to pick up vegetables at a farmers market for the family store. In high school, he ran for class president, losing to an "athlete and personality boy." He had no close friends; but he was widely respected, and he had no enemies.

When he won a scholarship to Harvard, necessity demanded that he choose the hometown Whittier College. His family could not afford his living expenses elsewhere because his older brother, Harold, had contracted tuberculosis. Nixon, however, showed no discernible bitterness. Harold's death two-and-a-half years later apparently

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intensified his will to succeed. Nixon was the Big Man on Campus—class president, founder of a fraternity, rotten football player but good sport, and winner of the Reader's Digest Southern California Extemporaneous Speaking Contest of 1933. He was also the lead actor in the school play, so skilled that he could cry on cue. "Buckets of tears. I was amazed at his perfection," said the drama coach. The school yearbook recorded:

> After one of the most successful years the college has ever witnessed we stop to reminisce, and come to the realization that much of the success was due to the efforts of this very gentleman. Always progressive, and with a liberal attitude, he has led us through the year with flying colors.

Then on to Duke Law School, where he closed the library every night, including weekends, and lived in a small shed lined with cardboard, without heat. He graduated with honors, third in his class. "His life to date," says Ambrose, "had been an unbroken record of achievement and success."

NIXON'S POLITICAL career had its origins during the war, on a remote Pacific island, where the Navy man ran a small store, just like at home, and was an expert poker player, known for his disciplined bluffing. He carefully guarded his winnings, exhibiting the virtue of frugality, and saved the money for his first campaign. He came rushing out of the war, and almost immediately a goal for his energy materialized.

In his congressional district, a group of small businessmen called the Committee of 100 had formed, searching for a bright young man to support against the long-time incumbent, a New Dealer, Jerry Voorhis. "Like their counterparts throughout Southern California, and indeed through the nation," writes Ambrose, "these middle-class Old Guard Republicans were in a mood close to desperation." They believed they were true-blue Americans, but they had lost their rightful place in the world because of the unnatural Depression for which they had no explanation. Roosevelt's presidency was a warp in time. Yet again and again they had been frustrated. Liberalism was leading to socialism, which led to communism. What kept this un-Americanism in power was an unholy alliance of labor unions and minorities, Hollywood celebrities and federal bureaucrats. (This enemies list—cast as special interests, radical chic, and big government—has lasted for decades.) Two systems were in conflict, according to Nixon: "One advocated by the New Deal is government control in regulating our lives. The other calls for individual freedom and all that initiative can produce." With this formulation, Nixon convinced the Committee of 100 that he was the man to slate.

"HAD ENOUGH?" was the Republican slogan of 1946. (These magic words were manufactured for the GOP by the Harry M. Frost advertising company.) Like the late 1970s, the late 1940s was a period of economic and foreign policy turmoil. And the right had ready answers. Communists and fellow travelers were "gaining positions of importance in virtually every federal department and bureau," Nixon told an American Legion crowd. "They are boring from within, striving to force private enterprise into bankruptcy, and thus bring about the socialization of America's basic institutions and industries." What's more, he elaborated at another campaign stop, "There are those walking in high official places . . . who would lead us into a disastrous foreign policy whereby we will be guilty of . . . depriving the people of smaller nations of their freedoms." Here was an anticipation of McCarthyism, and the prehistory of rollback and the Reagan Doctrine.

The symmetry between the right's frustration on the domestic scene and its frustration with the international scene was striking. At the war's end, communism, or more precisely the Red Army, was on the march. To conservatives, no explanation made so much sense as that President Roosevelt had betrayed Eastern Europe at Yalta. For the right, the acceptance of the cold war, and of containment, and later of deterrence, meant reconciling itself to permanent frustration. The incumbent Democratic stewardship of this policy provided the opportunity to taint the Democrats as unpatriotic. By contrast, the right began to move away from the old isolationism toward an eschatological anti-communism—a program of simple vengeance that would result in an America once again untroubled by foreign problems. Nixon, in time, supported the Marshall Plan, the pillar of containment. Yet he cultivated the right's anxieties about a tense world; they were useful as a political instrument.

"IN BOTH Congress and the media, the investigative imperative now attaches itself exclusively to anti-Communist activities: of the FBI, the CIA, the National Security Council, and of course the White House (along with some private fundraisers). Peering into pro-Communist activities—such as those of young Benjamin Linder, killed in Nicaragua by Nicaraguans who would prefer not to live under Communism, thank you—would fall under the heading of 'McCarthyism'."

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Nixon's campaign for Congress consisted of unalloyed lies, innuendos, and distortions. The words the judicious Ambrose uses to describe it are "vicious . . . snarling . . . dirty." Many of the neighbors and friends who had known Nixon since he was a boy were shocked by the apparent transformation of character. "To them, this was a 'new Nixon.'" Later, a group of them prevented the Whittier City Council from naming a street after their most famous son, then vice president. "I had to win," was Nixon's rationale—the Protestant ethic without ethics. *This* Nixon was the only "new Nixon" that ever really mattered.

BUT THE emergence of the first "new Nixon" involved more than a question of character. From the beginning, Nixon's lack of principles was in the service of the principle of partisanship. He was very much a member of the resurgent Republican class of '46, and within that a creature of the embittered right wing. *U.S. News*, a purveyor of mostly uncritical Republicanism, immediately proclaimed 1946 as Year 1 in "a new cycle in American political history." This was wishful thinking, but it contained some truth, as Nixon's progress would bear out.

The realignment theory that emerged in the wake of Ronald Reagan's election has tended to overlook realignment's true origin in the old Republican minority and in its reaction against the New Deal, which brought it little but sorrow until the midterm elections of 1946. For the GOP, no greater gains have been recorded since: 56 House and 13 Senate seats. This shift was traumatic enough to inspire Senator J. William Fulbright to call for President Truman's acceptance of the electoral returns as a vote of no-confidence and, in the British way, to step down. Despite the shock, though, the general features of the old party system seemed stable, as the Truman victory two years later confirmed. Beneath the surface, however, there were deep cracks.

The 1946 results were a tremor, a premonition of the coming Republican strength in the Sunbelt and Mountain states. In Congress, the conservative Southern Democrats and the right-wing Republicans made an alliance of convenience that was not defeated until Lyndon Johnson assumed the civil rights cause as his own in 1964. The Democratic setback in 1946 also exposed the party's ideological confusion about the post-New Deal era, a confusion that is still to be resolved. But the right wing demonstrated its willingness to engage in a single-minded politics of desperation. This sentiment was later made into a complex formula by Kevin Phillips, an aide to Nixon's 1968 campaign manager, John Mitchell. In *The New Republican Majority*, Phillips proposed a polarization of the electorate along racial, ethnic, and regional lines. It was Nixon's historic mission to exploit these tensions to create a lasting GOP advantage.

NIXON'S entrance onto the political scene was a sign to the old right of both hope and vengeance. He was loved for his enemies. His early Washington years illustrated the evil of the conspiracy that the Old Guard believed had been in power since 1933. "I was elected to smash the labor bosses," he declared upon arriving in the capital. He was tutored by Father John Cronin, one of the communism experts who attached themselves to the right, to expose Communists "in the State Department." So Nixon chose an assignment on the House Un-American Activities Committee.

That Alger Hiss turned out to have been almost certainly guilty was Nixon's great luck. He did not enter his first "crisis" as a disinterested party, but out of sheer partisan impulse. At a crucial juncture in the case, Nixon secretly met in a New York hotel room with the "senior brain trust of the Republican Party, and had this group decided to withhold its approval, Nixon would have had to drop the case." These men (John Foster Dulles, who was Thomas Dewey's chief foreign policy adviser; Allen Dulles; C. Douglas Dillon; Christian Herter) were the personifications of the GOP Eastern Establishment, held in contempt by the Old Guard. Yet Nixon's determination had made the case such a partisan cause that they were drawn into it. And Nixon convinced them to bless his continuing struggle.

Nixon had hit upon a theme that Republican candidates used with tremendous effect in the 1950 midterm elections. It was a theme that the GOP had been marketing at the lower frequencies for years, without much result. Now it worked: "Fear. Nixon knew that fear was the way to get to the public. Fear of Alger Hiss and his kind; fear of Stalin and his bombs and rockets; fear of change; fear of someone getting ahead in the arms race; fear."

When Hiss was convicted, Nixon immediately intensified his partisanship. "This conspiracy," he said, "would have come to light long since had there not been a definite . . . effort on the part of certain high officials in two administrations [Roosevelt's and Truman's] to keep the public from knowing the facts." Among the congratulatory notes he received was one he "cherished most," from the Old Guard icon-in-exile, Herbert Hoover: "At last the stream of treason that existed in our government has been exposed in a fashion that all may believe."

By now, Nixon was running for the Senate, attacking the Democrats as the blame-America-first party, a party that "has been captured and is completely controlled by a group of ruthless, cynical seekers after power—committed to policies and principles completely foreign to those of its founders." His campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas was as noteworthy for its scurrilousness as his effort against Voorhis. Ambrose notes that Douglas herself was not entirely innocent of mudslinging. But once the campaign turned to mud, she was vastly outdone by the master.

SENATOR NIXON became Vice President Nixon in a thoroughly characteristic way: by becoming indispensable to the aspirations of a force larger than himself—those seeking the nomination of Dwight Eisenhower at the 1952 Republican convention. His role required nothing less than the betrayal of the Old Guard that had previously sustained him. Nixon had already been handpicked for the position by talent scout Dewey, who escorted him into a meeting with the Eisenhower political directorate months before the convention. Thus Nixon allied his ambition publicly with the force he had initially and privately encountered in the Hiss case.

The nomination turned on the outcome of a credentials fight between competing Southern delegations—one group pledged to Ike, the other to Senator Robert Taft, the Old Guard standard-bearer. And the key to the outcome of this issue was the vote of the big California delegation. Within the delegation, the central figure was Nixon, who, with great aplomb, fostered the notion that Taft was unelectable. Nixon then gave an eloquent speech on the convention floor swaying delegates to vote for the Eisenhower Southerners, who were

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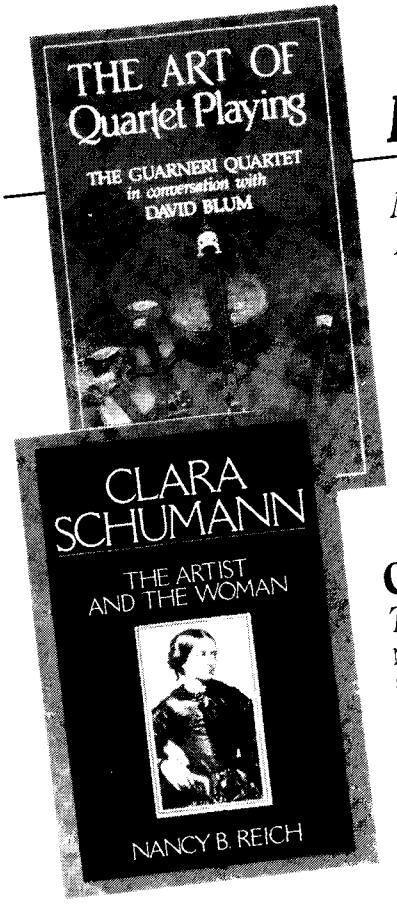
then seated. Years later, in 1969, while swearing in Nixon as president, Chief Justice Earl Warren, who, as governor, had been the nominal leader of that California delegation, confided to Nixon aide Herb Klein "that but for Nixon he might have won a compromise nomination for president himself in 1952."

Two months after the convention, Nixon was revealed to have maintained an $18,000 "slush fund," set up by friendly businessmen, for his personal use. His famous defense in the "Checkers" speech commingled themes from Horatio Alger with themes from Alger Hiss. There was the paean to hard work—"every dime we've got is honestly ours"—and the resolve to root out the all-encompassing conspiracy—"I am going to campaign up and down America until we drive the crooks and communists and those that defend them out of Washington." Quickly, Eisenhower embraced him: "You're my boy!" Back home, his old drama coach at Whittier College, Professor Upton, watched his former student on television put his head on Senator William Knowland's shoulder and weep tears of joy. "That's my boy?" Upton shouted. "That's my actor!"

For Eisenhower, Nixon served as the partisan id. He spoke the unspeakable, earning him Adlai Stevenson's sobriquet as "McCarthy in a white collar." Ike kept his distance, while gaining the benefit. Nixon was his bridge to the Old Guard, his conduit to McCarthy, and generally a source of political information. The vice president's many suggestions for foreign intervention, including dropping atom bombs on Vietnam in 1954 when the French were besieged at Dien Bien Phu, were uniformly rejected by the commander in chief. But he learned a great deal, traveled widely, and ran for the White House in 1960 on his superior experience.

WITHIN A YEAR of his honorable defeat by Kennedy, he was thinking of running for governor of California, a base from which he could again venture forth to win the GOP presidential nomination. The party establishment, "from Eisenhower on down," feared that the California right would seize control of the state party. Since 1946 the Southern California right had grown more confident and virulent. Its motor, in the early 1960s, was a forerunner of the New Right, founded in the bitter aftermath of Taft's 1952 convention defeat: the John Birch Society. The shift from the time of



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Representative Nixon was apparent in the election as congressman of John Rousselot, the Birch regional director for Southern California and five Sunbelt states. Rousselot's 1962 fund-raising dinner featured the renowned toastmaster Ronald Reagan.

The suggestion that Reagan might be a candidate for governor quickened the pressure on Nixon. After he announced, his fund-raising lunch at the Bohemian Club was attended by the massed corporate titans of California—"quite a contrast to the Committee of 100 from the 1946 campaign," writes Ambrose. But Nixon was not anointed. Instead he endured a primary against a right-wing candidate, Joe Shell, a former college football star turned oilman. Nixon attempted to denounce the Birch Society while giving credence to its anti-communist passion; he also did not want to alienate its activists and the many Republican officeholders who were Birch members. In the meantime, liberal Republicans deserted him to support the incumbent Democrat, Edmund "Pat" Brown. Soon Nixon was giving his most memorable performance since the "Checkers" speech: "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore, because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference." But he was wrong. There would be new Nixons; for them we must await Ambrose's concluding volume.

THE REAGAN YEARS, filled with rhetoric about "a new cycle in American political history," have curiously obscured Nixon. After all, it was Nixon, the native Californian, who began what Reagan hopped aboard. Unlike Reagan, he was painfully self-conscious about what he was doing, and about the price that was being exacted from him and others. Nixon actually lived and bore the scars of the social Darwinism that to Reagan has always been romance.

Moreover, the achievements of what is called the "Reagan revolution" pale next to the transformations that Nixon accomplished at all levels. Nixon in China is still breathtaking. By contrast, the most celebrated Reagan accomplishment—the change in the national brain waves from worried to happy, partly intended to induce amnesia about Nixon—has been the most ephemeral. Reagan's current bouts of cheerfulness, while the special prosecutor prepares his briefs, are more detached from reality than ever. In retrospect, Reagan may be seen as the end of the era that Nixon inaugurated.

As Reagan's benumbing optimism wears off, many of those who had faith in its powers are returning to a primordial resentment. Conservative activists and placemen, columnists and policy-makers are getting themselves in the mood for a young Nixon. If he cannot be found in 1988, a reconstituted Committee of 100 undoubtedly will begin the search.

He's back.

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

Sidney Blumenthal, a staff writer for the *Washington Post*, is the author of *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment: From Conservative Ideology to Political Power* (Times Books).

THE NAYMAN OF NOLAND

The Beckett Country: Samuel Beckett's Ireland by Eoin O'Brien, photographs by David Davison

(Black Cat Press, 402 pp., $60)

Four Dubliners by Richard Ellmann

(Library of Congress, 106 pp., $7)

On Beckett: Essays and Criticism edited by S. E. Gontarski

(Grove Press, 418 pp., $22.95, $12.95 paper)

Beyond Minimalism: Beckett's Late Style in the Theater by Enoch Brater

(Oxford University Press, 209 pp., $22.50)

Historians of the last two decades have recovered the experience of the mad, the leprous, the hermaphroditic, and the impotent, and have taught us to read earlier epochs for their silences and their suppressions. Those who live on the margins and in the interstices wear tattoos that encode history; and in learning how a community chooses its freaks and invents its deviants we construct a photographic negative of its social life. But when our age suffers the scrutiny that it freely gives to others, it may be that what will be remembered is our noise, not our silence, and what will have marked us is how we have treated not our hermaphrodites, but our geniuses.

It is a familiar tic of our modernity that when frightened we grow chatty. And in understanding the extraordinary growth of that form of chat called literary criticism, we need to see it, at least in part, as a response to the dissonance and the discontinuity that modernist art engendered in our culture. After the provocations of Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Kafka, Picasso, we have devised a system of talk that lets us absorb the disruptions of modernism, that lets us convert the revolutionary into the canonical—and that from the standpoint of the avant-garde might be seen as a last and insidious act of revenge.

As one who has lived past his apotheosis and deep into the age of criticism, Samuel Beckett has had to wage not only the battle against bewilderment but the more subtle battle against comprehension. He seems so well suited to a story we like to tell ourselves about ourselves—that we are placeless, nameless orphans of history; that our minds have come untethered; that our language is no better than silence; that our maimed bodies crawl through mud—that from the first performances of *Waiting for Godot* in 1953 he has been at the mercy of campfire nihilists. And for those who like to see history as a smooth succession of chapters, Beckett's work has sug-

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gested the story's ending. He gave the postwar generation a way to retell the plot of Western culture so that it reaches a tragic climax in our time. Dying faith, dying language, dying fiction could all be mourned in his name. In the 1950s, after years of neglect, Beckett was made to endure a new indignity: he became a representative man. Henceforth, if his imagination flagged, it was because civilization had grown weary.

Within Beckett's life, modernism and criticism have played out their antagonism. He innovates incessantly, and with each innovation there is heard the noisy whir of interpretive machinery as it knits novelty into tradition. Beckett's critics often claim that more has been written about him than about any other modernist. This may well be true; but it has not made his task any easier. "No symbols where none intended," he warned in *Watt*, and knowing that we will try to puzzle out his work, he has made us pay the high costs of interpretation. In his latest phase, measured from his 60th to his 80th birthday, he has made the contortions of the critical intelligence part of the drama. What Pozzo says to Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* Beckett in effect has told the professors: "Think, pig!" he has said, and we pigs have thought.

If Beckett owns a coffee table, if it is a rather large and steady coffee table that can bear great weight, it ought to be adorned with *The Beckett Country*—a heavy, gorgeous, absurd book that will stare at Beckett as he stares at it and will remind him of the steep, sharp turns of the literary life, the doggedness of Ireland, the ironies of criticism. The governing idea behind the project is a pictorial recovery of Beckett's Irish roots, and alongside the expected documentary evidence—Beckett's home, his school, his haunts, his friends—the book includes scores of landscapes (rocky beaches, mountain vistas, banks of clouds), included on the strength of any passing mention in Beckett's writing. David Davison, a gifted photographer, renders these landscapes beautifully, apparently without stopping to consider whether his canons of the beautiful have anything to do with Beckett's own. Where, one wonders, are the severed heads and the bloody torsos? What would blind Hamm make of the sunset? In which heap of sand would Winnie be buried up to her neck? Where are the ash bins, the tape machines, the harsh lights, the urns?

What animates the colossal misconception that is *The Beckett Country* is a craving to domesticate the demon, to locate a Beckett country as we have located a Brontë country, a place one might visit on a holiday, invigorated by the thought that He walked Here. Still, this is only a somewhat rawer version of what most of us instinctively do with Beckett. We emphasize the Irishness, the booziness, the fondness for Chaplin and Keaton, the clowning, the wit—as much as to say that he is just folks, a crusty literary grandfather, cold-tongued but warmhearted, and that his unforgiving books forgiven, he is one of us.

DRAWING BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Suppose, however, that he is not. Suppose that his imaginative stringency, ever more stringent as time passes, obeys quite other laws than our own. And suppose that he is supremely careless of our needs and purposes, intent not to release his work to a waiting public but to preserve it from our taint.

Born in 1906 Beckett came to artistic maturity just when the great avant-garde movements of the '20s were beginning to dissolve, due both to internal strain and to the pressures of social crisis. He left Dublin for Paris in 1928, attached himself to Joyce, translated part of *Finnegans Wake* into French, wrote an essay on Proust, composed poetry, wandered in Europe, and published his first novel, *Murphy*, in 1938. Joyce died in 1941; *Murphy* went virtually unread; and Beckett was left alone with his modernity.

He had the ambiguous fortune to be the last of the first generation of modernists, the one who arrived too late to ride the wave of cultural celebrity and who, when the wave receded, was left gasping on the beach. The sense of a common revolutionary program in the arts, a movement of like sensibilities that would renovate a culture—this has not been Beckett's experience. Nor has he sought it. He belongs to no avant-garde, because for him there is no *après*. Seeking the end, seeking silence, pursuing the death of the imagination, Beckett can have admirers, but no genuine successors.

And no genuine predecessors. The late Richard Ellmann closed his leisurely, amiable survey of *Four Dubliners* with a chapter on Beckett (Wilde, Joyce, and Yeats being the other three). But as he cheerfully admits, his fourth Dubliner is a kind of counterfeit. Beckett has neutralized his Irishness by writing in French, much as he has neutralized Joyce's influence with the influence of Proust. He uses the past to dismantle the past, and more than any other modernist he has seen the beauties and opportunities in rubble. One thinks of Joyce's boast that if Dublin were destroyed *Ulysses* would tell us how to reconstruct the city, and one imagines the Beckettian rejoinder: if Dublin manages to survive, his work will tell us how to destroy it. As Ellmann aptly suggests, it is Beckett who has most closely embodied Joyce's own image of the artist as "Nayman of Noland."

Two-and-a-half years ago, in a now-celebrated event, a director of the Amer-

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ican Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, decided to stage *Endgame* as an urban apocalypse, setting it in a tunnel with an overturned subway car and supplementing the text with music by Philip Glass. Although more subtle and more interesting, this was yet another attempt to locate the Beckett country, to find identifiable landmarks, even post-nuclear landmarks, that might provide the consolations of intelligibility. Beckett, who tried to stop the ART production, made it clear that he has no interest in receiving such gifts of interpretation. In a disclaimer attached to the program notes he wrote that:

> Any production of *Endgame* which ignores my stage directions is completely unacceptable to me. My play requires an empty room and two small windows. The American Repertory Theatre production, which dismisses my directions, is a complete parody of the play as conceived by me.

Here is the artist as sovereign and unappeasable deity, as sacred compositor enraged by profane words, not only as original creator ("conceived by me") but as final audience ("unacceptable to me"), the artist as sole proprietor, as stern landlord. No subway cars permitted in my bare room.

In a counterstatement the ART's director, Robert Brustein, wrote that "to insist on strict adherence to each parenthesis of the published text . . . not only robs collaborative authors of their respective freedom, but threatens to turn the theater into waxworks." What makes this poignant, and what turns the whole mucky affair into an allegory of the relation between Beckett and Us, is Brustein's yearning for collaboration, for exchange and negotiation, a compromise between two freedoms. In an article on the legal implications of the episode, Martin Garbus and Gerald Singleton complacently suggested that the "lesson for playwrights and directors alike is that a play represents a composite art form, a shared communal experience, in which both playwright and director have rights and duties to each other."

But "collaboration" and "shared communal experience" are platitudes that *Endgame* itself, like the rest of Beckett's work, remorselessly exposes. The theater as waxworks is not far from a Beckettian ideal. What is so difficult to accept is that his art is no offering to us; we are sacrificed to it; and the most valuable thing about *On Beckett*, edited by S. E. Gontarski, is that in assembling the responses of directors, actors, critics, and imaginative writers to Beckett's work, it makes this provoking pattern clear. Beckett exposes his art to others not in order to edify them but in order to implicate them in his own fate.

This would be a monstrous form of literary egotism were it not that Beckett has been more severe toward his own ego than toward any other. He has said that the key to a breakthrough in his fiction was the recognition of his stupidity; he has announced that "to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail"; and he has described the labor of that failing art in the harshest possible terms: "The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express."

AFTER THE decades of neglect, Beckett by 1960 held the attention of the atheists, the absurdists, the anti-novelists, and a fair share of common humanity. To keep their rapt devotion he had only to work variations on what Hamm in *Endgame* called "the old questions, the old answers." Instead, beginning in the early '60s, he started to disencumber himself of the last rags and bones of an already emaciated imagination. Notoriously, the works themselves threaten to dissolve into air—plays lasting just minutes or even (as in *Breath*) just seconds, prose pieces reduced to a few hundred words, leaving just a voice and an image, a few tones and a few stones. Four silent figures pace the stage in rigid geometry (*Quad*); a woman rocks in a chair listening to her recorded voice (*Rockaby*); a disembodied mouth tells the fragment of a fragment of a life (*Not I*). One can spend an evening and see a decade's accomplishment.

In a sense Beckett has at last defeated criticism. These "ends and odds," these "fizzles," exist past the limit of a critical vocabulary, and with works so clean and spare, interpretation shows its muddy boots. And yet as the Gontarski collection and Enoch Brater's study of Beckett's most recent dramatic works show, writings on late Beckett have become the most interesting part of the critical corpus. Studies of the pre-1960 work still tend to assimilate Beckett to more conventional concerns: his relationship to the visual arts (Dougald McMillan's essay in Gontarski), his use of repetition (Rubin Rabinovitz), his weaving of philosophic themes (Lawrence E. Harvey). But with studies of the late work, as in the essays by John Pilling and Marjorie Perloff on the prose and in Brater's work on the drama, it has become clear that Beckett has changed the terms of critical response. Brater calls his book *Beyond Minimalism*, but he might almost have called it *Beyond Criticism*, since it charts Beckett's movement beyond classificatory rubrics (the absurd, the nihilistic, the post-Joycean) into a region where all rubrics come undone.

Because Beckett's every artistic decision is observed, because he knows it, and because we know that he knows, each detail of the work becomes charged: the number of steps it takes to cross the stage, the intensity of a spotlight, the length of a shadow. Beckett has received, and therefore can demand, an aesthetic attention heightened to an almost unimaginable degree. The best critics of the late work are those who have found a way to surrender the dream of critical mastery and simply to perform for us these acts of heightened attention.

Brater describes his project as a study of Beckett's recent theater style "in the context of his earlier drama," and this may be taken as one sign of Beckett's triumph. A writer who has persistently been made to epitomize the plight of the Western tradition has invented a plight and a tradition of his own. As Brater clearly realizes, Beckett must be understood in relation to himself before he can be understood in relation to others. Unlike Proust or Joyce, he never attempted to consolidate his vision into a single grand book. He has instead allowed his career to unfold in a series of visions and revisions; experiments, refinements, corrections; retractions and eliminations—or as Beckett puts it more picturesquely, "First dirty, then make clean."

WHAT HAS become startlingly clear is that Beckett is one of the few among us who has taken seriously the problem of making an individual life into a coherent whole. Capable of referring to one of his own works as "[like] something out of Beckett," he has achieved an uncanny self-detachment that lets him study his life and revise it as if it were just another text. The difficulty that he exposes everywhere in his work, the loss of harmony between past and future selves, the dissolution of personality into a series of isolated gestures—this is a difficulty that Beckett himself has met by concentrating on his past with a terrible intensity, and at every stage allowing it to direct the shape of his life.

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His own career has become his most intricate plot, described by Maurice Blanchot as "an experiment without results, yet continuing with increasing purity from book to book by rejecting the very resources, meager as they are, that might permit it to continue." As long as it continues we can only breathe with Beckett's Clov, "Something is taking its course."

In its austere and forbidding way, Beckett's has become an exemplary modern life, and this helps explain an increasingly conspicuous feature of the criticism: the shift of attention from the work to the worker. The Gontarski collection, which divides almost equally between critical analysis and personal homage, makes it clear that Beckett's person has become as beguiling as his prose. "Beckett," says Susan Sontag, "is probably the only person I ever really wanted to meet in the adult part of my life. I was very pleased to be in his presence. I felt and feel a general reverence for him."

General reverence, it is fair to say, is not what the novels and plays tend to encourage; the deep perplexity crystallized by Sontag's remark is that the emotions stirred by Beckett are radically distinct from the emotions stirred by his work. The work disassembles our values, prods and pokes at them, corrodes them, returns them with their rusty hinges exposed. But the intelligence behind the work is so luminous, so pure, so classical in its rigor, that it often exemplifies the very values it is busily debunking. The grimness of the work and the virtuosity of the worker are what leave us with the characteristic and unsettling double response: Oh Misery! Oh Genius!

A temptation is to bring these responses together and to soften the blow of Beckett's critique by insisting that it is, after all, a heroic one, and that a species that produces Beckett is to that extent redeemed. This was the tactic of the Nobel Prize committee that, in awarding Beckett its prize, judged him to have "transmuted the destitution of modern man into his exaltation." Such sentimentality must be for the stockholders in Stockholm; in the age of Beckett it is unbecoming. Instead of trying to harmonize the unrelenting critique and the positive moral image, we would do better to pry them apart. Beckett does not tell us that the indignities of our predicament can be magically "transmuted" by art. He does not save us; he assaults us with his integrity.

MICHAEL LEVENSON

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IN THE LION'S MOUTH

The Voice of Prose: Early Prose and Autobiography by Boris Pasternak edited by Christopher Barnes

(Grove Press, 256 pp., $9.95 paper)

In the summer of 1912, Boris Pasternak, a Russian student, visited Venice. He was not yet a writer—or, more accurately, he had, at the age of 22, several immature Symbolist poems to his name. But what the future had in store for him was affecting his life in a strange way. He had already abandoned two careers, music and philosophy, although he had shown genuine promise in both fields. The most important thing for him was the pull of poetry, and of all that poetry entailed in his time and his country.

Eighteen years later he described his visit to Italy in the autobiographical tale "Safe Conduct." Pasternak's pages on Venice belong among the very best ever written about that city. There are lines that can be reread and quoted endlessly: the lines describing how Pasternak walked "to a rendezvous with some built-up space as though it were a live personality"; how "Venice is a city inhabited by buildings ... [and] overgrown by centuries of travelers' delight as though encrusted with seashells"; on Venetian painting—"painting itself like a golden marshland, a primordial pool of creativity." After his trip he began to write constantly; and he had no other occupation until his death in 1960.

In 1930, however, when "Safe Conduct" was written, Pasternak sensed more clearly than ever before that art and culture are often bought at a heavy price. The splendor of Venice had a bleaker side: the grim might of the Venetian fleet, the aggressive policies of the doges, the ruthless and duplicitous system of the Venetian state. Not so long ago, Pasternak scholars noticed phrases in his autobiography that had somehow escaped their attention before (not to mention the attention of the Soviet censors):

> The emblem of the lion has figured in Venice in a variety of ways. Thus, on the Censors' staircase right next to paintings by Veronese and Tintoretto, the slit for depositing secret denunciations was sculpted in the shape of a lion's maw. It is well known what terror this *bocca di leóne* struck into the hearts of contemporaries, and that gradually it became a sign of ill-breeding to mention any persons mysteriously fallen through that exquisitely carved orifice when the authorities themselves expressed no regrets.

It is unlikely that Pasternak gave much thought to the *bocca di leóne* in the days of his first encounter with Venice. But it is not surprising that it rose to the surface of his consciousness at the beginning of the period of Stalin's rule. For more than 30 years, Pasternak lived at almost no distance from the beast's maw in which his friends perished one after the other. ("All around there is the haunting sight of lions' muzzles, nosing into every privacy, sniffing everything, lions' jaws that devour one life after another in the secrecy of their lair. All around there is the leonine roar of an imaginary immortality.")

When *Doctor Zhivago* was published in the West and Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1958, the *bocca di leóne* began to close on him. The Komsomol leader, Vladimir Semichastny, who later became the head of the KGB, publicly called Russia's best writer a mangy sheep and a swine. He made it clear that Pasternak could fall into nonexistence. At their meetings the literati repeated Semichastny's words almost in unison, though they gave them a more elaborate form. Pasternak died a persecuted man, although the authorities had not made the final decision to destroy him. After his death Pasternak's name remained forbidden; then it became semiforbidden. As for Semichastny, shortly afterward he fell into nonexistence himself, and nobody expressed any regret about

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him. His public declaration concerning Pasternak proved to be the only trace he left in history—though a notable one.

Recently the Soviets have been saying that Pasternak will cease to be semiforbidden in *glasnost* Russia. They assert that *Doctor Zhivago* will be printed; Andrei Voznesensky declared that "it will be published in full, not a single word or a single line will be cut." (Its publication date has been postponed, incidentally, from 1987 to 1988.) There is talk, too, about a complete collected works of Pasternak in six volumes. These are to appear by 1990. Will Pasternak finally become in Russia what he in fact is—the pride of his country?

Pasternak's story is usually regarded as the story of a lonely artist fighting the state machine in one-to-one combat. But that is not exactly the way it was. He was not a fighter by nature. Unlike his friends Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Osip Mandelstam, he not infrequently yielded to the surrounding world. He sought for a language in common and tried to obey orders. He took his country in two ways: on the one hand, it was the Soviet Union, "this unprecedented, impossible State of ours, bursting in upon the centuries and taken up by them for ever after"; on the other hand, it was Russia, "the territory of conscience." Pasternak never betrayed his conscience.

The surrounding world elicited an almost involuntary response from Pasternak, which was transformed into poetry and prose, into meditations on life and death. These meditations refuted state dogma by their very existence. "The fleet was something that enervated and oppressed. But, as in a couple of connecting vessels, something redemptive arose from the shore as an equal response to its pressure. And to understand this means understanding how art always deceives the client who commissions it." The Venetian fleet and the Venetian State Security passed away; Veronese and Tintoretto remained. Pasternak remained, too, although it was probably harder for him than for Tintoretto or Veronese.

IN RUSSIA Pasternak is known above all as a poet. His early prose is now being republished, including even the passages in "Safe Conduct" that were suspect in the eyes of Soviet censorship; but *Doctor Zhivago* so far still waits its turn. (Of course more people than the authorities suspect have read it in the Western editions.) The situation is reversed in the West. Here it is *Doctor Zhivago* that people know. The film turned Pasternak's novel into a phenomenon of mass culture. I have come across restaurants and night clubs bearing the name of its hero. Pasternak's poetry has escaped that fate, if only because translating it is a more or less hopeless undertaking.

But Pasternak's early prose, no less difficult to translate, is also largely unknown. Not every Slavic scholar realizes that *Doctor Zhivago* is actually Pasternak's third novel; the first two were never finished, but impressive pages from them remain. Besides this, Pasternak's early prose is remarkable as a phenomenon of art. *Doctor Zhivago* continues the philosophical tradition of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, but it is actually written in the semi-Victorian manner of the minor authors of their milieu. The prose written before *Doctor Zhivago* is comparable to Proust or Musil in style and in quality. (This may be seen even in the brief passages I have quoted.) For that reason this collection of Pasternak's early prose, edited by Christopher Barnes, is a genuine literary event, the more so because its translations are careful and almost always good.

The first volume to appear includes a kaleidoscope of material. There are stories in which artists appear and the talk is of art; the tale "Zhenya Luvers' Childhood" (the beginning of Pasternak's first novel); "Safe Conduct," almost a novel about the coming-to-being of a poet, Pasternak's *Remembrance of Things Past*; dramatic fragments about the French Revolution comparable to Büchner's "Danton's Death"; and "The Quintessence," a confession of faith in poetry and a discussion of the dangerous position of the poet in the historical universe, and the best piece in the book. When the second volume—which should certainly include "Tale," a fragment from Pasternak's second uncompleted novel—appears, the English reader will have almost the entire corpus of Pasternak's prose in his hands.

Pasternak's early prose may seem convoluted and mannered in comparison with his last novel. In his old age, Pasternak himself thought so, too. The style is overburdened with images and syntactically intricate. (The translators have attempted to alleviate and clarify Pasternak's periods, changing their pace and sometimes breaking them up into several phrases.) Pasternak cultivates the elliptical, the incomplete, the fragmentary. Now and then peripheral characters invade the narrative or seemingly insignificant comments intrude, while at the same time the essential events are rendered somewhat incomprehensible. Epiphanous descriptions take the place of action. Apparently random chains of facts take the place of a plot constructed out of causes and consequences: instead of a hero, time and space are themselves the actors. Often the city—the receptacle of history—turns out to be the hero. Thus the portraits of three cities in "Safe Conduct"—Venice, Marburg, and Moscow—are perhaps more alive and more significant than even the splendid portraits of Rainer Maria Rilke, Hermann Cohen, and Vladimir Mayakovsky.

The roots of this stylistic phenomenon must be sought in the particular relationship between Pasternak's poetry and his prose. Pasternak connected and opposed them simultaneously:

> Poetry and prose are two polarities, indivisible one from another. Through its inborn hearing, poetry seeks out the melody of nature amid the noise of the lexicon, and picking it up like some motif, it proceeds to improvise on that theme. By its feeling, through its spirituality, prose seeks and finds men in the category of speech. And when man is found lacking in an age, then it recreates him from memory and sets him there and pretends for the good of mankind to have found him in the present.

The prose writer is always somewhat separate from language; he apprehends it as speech. The poet is, in essence, in accord with language; he is merged with it,

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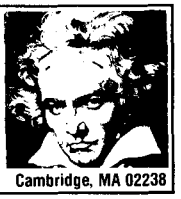

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embodying its élan. Yet Pasternak's prose is just the other side of his poetry. He moves from one to the other with astounding ease. Thus the design of his second, unfinished novel is realized partly in "Tale" and partly in the long lyric poem "Spektorsky"—two works whose characters and general train of thought coincide. Each describes different periods in the hero's life, but the tale overflows with references to the poem, and the poem with references to the tale. The transition is virtually imperceptible. Pasternak's poetry takes from prose the rhythms of living speech, slang and bureaucratic locutions, realistic details, and, last but not least, a sense of history. His prose takes from poetry its plotlessness and, at the same time, its linguistic dynamics, its saturation, its density. "There will be no contradiction: it is all life," Pasternak writes in "Tale."

As Roman Jakobson once observed in what has now become almost a commonplace, Pasternak's world is governed not by the principle of metaphor but by the principle of metonymy. This means that objects and phenomena in his world are associated not by analogy, but by contiguity. (Pasternak asserted something similar himself in one of his early essays.) He writes, for instance: "A suffocating sun was borne along on many striped bench seats in the train from Moscow." The statement is complicated and characteristic enough: a metonymy substitutes the reflection of a sunbeam for the sun itself, and the image of the sun for that of the passengers who are panting on bench seats. Things exchange their attributes; they crowd one another out as though they were "playing one another." The boundaries between the whole and the part, between the active and the passive are erased. A singular concept of personality arises. In Pasternak a human being is not so much active as receptive; he dissolves in the surrounding world and in other people. He becomes almost illusory, "having caused another to speak through his own lips," like the old actor in the story "Letters from Tula." This other speaking through our own lips is God, or the world, or language. For Pasternak, these three concepts virtually coincide.

Among Pasternak's early pieces, "The Apelles Mark" is especially distinguished by its tonality and its plot. It is a Romantic story—more accurately, an imitation of a Romantic story, or a parody of it. A certain Heinrich Heine appears here, obviously a namesake of the renowned poet and to a large degree the renowned poet himself, transported to a modern-day Italy of electricity and telephones. He enters a literary contest against Relinquimini, an Italian poet of a pompous and theatrical cast, and beats him by transferring the argument from the realm of literature to the realm of life. Curiously enough, Relinquimini is the favorite hero of Pasternak's earliest prose fragments, a hero with whom he clearly identified. Critics see a connection between the name Relinquimini (which means, approximately, "you will remain") and Zhivago (the Russian root means "life"). Relinquimini's losing marks the author's own repudiation of the theatrical and romantic conception of the poet (the conception Tsvetaeva and Mayakovsky accepted).

The consequences of that repudiation are most visible in "Zhenya Luvers' Childhood." The story gives a remarkable analysis of the consciousness of an adolescent girl, who sees the world as an artist must see it: not through a screen of clichés, but directly and seriously. One finds here echoes of Tolstoy, and also a very advanced modernist technique. Zhenya Luvers is a veritable epitome of spontaneity. Not too much happens in the story: Pasternak just plunges into the stream of Zhenya's perceptions and meditations. Zhenya, who lives with her rather wealthy parents in the Russian provinces close to the Ural mountains, is gradually introduced into the world of grown-ups, learning to cope with such concepts as "card game" and "factory," "Asia" and "sin." Her childish look distorts things, but it refines and renews them at the same time. The experience of her first period is described with marvelous discretion and accuracy. After a street accident, she begins to understand the meaning of death: the concept of another person—"the person the Commandments have in mind"—enters her life. Consequently she discovers what space and time, body and soul, language and ethics are.

It is very nice that the Soviet government wishes to rehabilitate Pasternak. But there is a sense in which it is *he* who should rehabilitate *them*. Recently Pasternak was readmitted to the Union of Soviet Writers. The Soviet liberal and semiliberal establishment undoubtedly considers it a great victory. In fact, it only adds insult to injury. The Union of Soviet Writers includes several dozen genuine writers, very good to moderately good, and several thousand who are totally fake. Pasternak, however, belongs to a different and much more exclusive club, in the company of Shakespeare and Pushkin. His truly open personality is hardly likely to fit any bureaucrat's notion of *glasnost*.

TOMAS VENCLOVA

Tomas Venclova is a Lithuanian writer and assistant professor of Russian literature at Yale University.

LONG SHADOWS

The Afternoon Sun
by David Pryce-Jones

(Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 214 pp., $15.95)

The fiction of David Pryce-Jones—about aspects of 20th-century experience as diverse as the phenomenon of terrorism and the upsurge of religiosity in a skeptical society—may not be familiar to American readers. But they may remember his prescient *The Face of Defeat*, a firsthand account of the attitudes of Palestinian refugees in 1967, and more particularly his biography of Unity Mitford, which created a considerable stir in the '70s. The Mitford clan attempted to suppress the book on the grounds that the author unduly magnified a schoolgirl crush on Hitler. They failed; and the critics generally agreed that Unity's enchantment with Nazism was an extreme symptom of the pathological anti-Semitism of a segment of the British upper class, rather than a melodramatic aberration. Pryce-Jones has also written authoritatively and without pedantry on Israel, on France under Nazi occupation, on the Hungarian revolution. Born in Vienna, he is thoroughly familiar with Central Europe, as well as with England, where he was raised.

This life, and this engagement with

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the major issues of the day, sound like useful preparation for the grand design of his latest novel, *The Afternoon Sun*, whose plot encompasses a century of European history from the mid-1890s to the present. The action moves over Europe; the canvas is immense. In some 200 pages the author traces the rise and fall of four generations of the Ellingens, an assimilated Jewish family, from the illusory tranquillity of post-emancipation Europe through two world wars to the final cataclysm.

Gustav Ellingen, a foundling born in 1839 in a Bavarian orphanage, makes his way to Vienna "with his back to the afternoon sun." Five feet tall, misshapen, grotesque to the point of caricature, but endowed with prodigious intelligence and will, he succeeds in building a financial empire equal in scope to those of the Oppenheims and the Rothschilds. By 1904 he is a baron, socially accepted and universally honored. This spectacular ascent, though it telescopes the rise of a number of legendary Jewish families, must be taken on faith. But Gustav does not found a many-branched family. His one child, Henrietta, has something of her father's energy, but none of his perverse idealism.

Concerned not with the grandiose achievement of power by an outcast Jew but merely with material success, Henrietta manages to recoup something of the fortune lost during World War I. In 1938, after the Nazi takeover of Austria, she escapes to England with the English lover of her deceased first husband. Having unwittingly married one homosexual by whom she had a son, she wittingly marries another; there is a suggestion that she may have homosexual tendencies herself. Her son, Jules, a talented musician who remains a dilettante, leaves for Hungary instead of accompanying her. In 1941 he returns to Vienna, unaccountably, and he is deported. After the war Henrietta learns of the existence of Jules's own son, whom she finds and brings to England. The aftermath is seen through the eyes of this great-grandson of Gustav, also called Jules.

TO COVER SO MUCH territory in time, space, and human experience within the compass of a brief novel seems self-defeatingly ambitious. For his purpose Pryce-Jones employs a clipped, laconic narrative style, unlike that of his previous novels. His sensitive portrait of a religious visionary in a Welsh village (*Shirley's Guild*) and the sharply etched characters in an English underground cell (*The England Commune*) demonstrated his gift for creating full-fleshed, complex individuals in a specific environment. So we must assume that Pryce-Jones's present shorthand is a choice, not a lapse.

Does it work? The themes of the novel—the fabulous "court Jew," the chaos of World Wars I and II, the finale of the Holocaust, whose consequences occupy the second half of *The Afternoon Sun*—are all too familiar. How, in the treatment of these subjects, can one avoid repetitive description and predictable emotion?

In dealing with what befell the Jews, postmodernist novelists have tried to meet the challenge by abandoning literal representation. To the applause of critics, events have been intimated, disguised, or distorted. Except for occasional passages, the pseudo-poetic fantasies of *The White Hotel*, the elaborate mystifications of *Sophie's Choice*, and the subtler allegory of Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939* circumvent brute reality. What happened emerges obliquely. The reader is spared the blunt attack of a circumstantial account.

Pryce-Jones indulges in no such stylish devices to obviate banality. There are no veils or literary subterfuges in *The Afternoon Sun*. War, the Nazi program, the Bolshevik absorption of Eastern Europe are givens; they require neither demonstration nor argument. That is how the world turned. But such restraint has a price; too often the reader is breathlessly hurried along from decade to decade. Still, the economy of the action is periodically relieved by brilliant flashes of illumination that become the crucial episodes of the novel. The pace slackens. In letters and conversations characters pause to take stock of how they and the age failed.

THE LETTERS in particular reveal an egoism, an indifference, a startling unawareness of the forces about to overwhelm their authors—a condition true for both Jew and gentile. In 1934 the sheltered scions of the Ellingens are planning a Mediterranean tour, discussing the magnificence of Mycenean tombs, and wondering whether Germany should be included in the itinerary. In 1945, after the war, a German nobleman, Jules's closest boyhood friend, writes to Henrietta in a penitential mood. As a staff officer in the Nazi army he glimpsed Jules among prisoners marching to a death camp and made no move to save him: "Nothing that I could have done would have changed the fate of Jules or of the entire column of unfortunates but that is not an answer to the look he gave me."

Other aristocratic friends, too enlightened for prejudice and heavily indebted to the Ellingens for past kindnesses, explain their passive complicity in Nazi crimes. They view their admissions as exculpations: to survive they had to join the ruling power. Trusted servants, who prudently took what they could before the Nazis completed the looting of the Ellingen estates, betray their shock at facing the unexpected return of ghosts with claims. The scenes in which various characters rationalize their behavior are among the most effective in the book. Anyone who visited Germany immediately after the Nazi defeat will recognize the authenticity of these "explanations," whether voiced by an intellectual or by a waiter trying to be convivial.

An unexpected twist appears in the final pages. During the '60s, Jules's son, raised in England, visits Austria and Hungary to learn about his family, about what befell his parents. Repelled by the moral decay he perceives in both democratic Austria and the Hungarian People's Republic, he announces to a shocked Henrietta that he will go to Palestine to "join our people": he has concluded that the ambiguous, craven role

DANIEL DA VOLTERRA, "THE BREECHES-MAKER," ON MICHELANGELO'S *LAST JUDGMENT*

Yes, at first my hand trembled so much
I nearly spattered my beard. I had to laugh.
I never thought to rise so high, to touch
the Divine One's Work. He built his scaffold;
they built mine. Staring up a martyr's crotch
I laid thick skirts of paint or thinner wisps
to swirl around a sinner's loins. They watched
below, the pious ones. With nods and whispers
they showed that they approved. Organs of shame
which he exposed I covered by my skill
and thereby clarified the Master's name.
I knew I had obeyed a higher will
and been the last to see his great work whole.
So knelt and said a prayer for his soul.

RODGER KAMENETZ

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of Jews in a non-Jewish world is intolerable. It is not clear whether Gustav's descendant yields to Henrietta's rational objections, but his sudden reaction becomes a coda to the saga.

Perhaps Pryce-Jones's foray into a century of history must be read as a cautionary tale. Then its tightness becomes plausible. The total failure of Jewish assimilation in Europe is perfectly crystallized in the fate of the Ellingens. No matter how tenuous the thread that bound them to their antecedents in post-emancipation Europe, it became the hangman's rope. Gustav's guiding maxim, echoed by his heirs, *"Jude muss man sein aber nicht zum abattoir"* ("Be a Jew but not to the point of the slaughterhouse"—a variant of the more familiar "Be a Jew at home but a man in public"), grows more hollow with each generation. Though the Jewishness evaporates, the abattoir is the destination.

Yet this novel is certainly no Zionist screed. In their debate Jules and Henrietta make the predictable arguments, the most haunting of which is that Jews will become killers as well as be killed. This grim reversal of Gustav's teaching—that assertive independence leads to mutual slaughter, if no longer to the slaughterhouse—seems to be the author's own commentary. What might have been redemptive for Arab and Jew degenerates into bloody confrontation, just as the new order springing up in the ruins of Europe becomes a travesty of the original promise. Nothing has been learned. This book is undergirded throughout by an indictment of a civilization that collapsed into barbarism, stupidity, and betrayal. Does the cryptic title presage a darkness with no glimmer of sunrise? It is a tribute to Pryce-Jones that the reader is prodded to seek a fuller exploration of the questions raised by his small book, particularly of the contradictions in human behavior that warrant hope as well as despair.

MARIE SYRKIN

Marie Syrkin is the author of, among other books, *Blessed Is the Match: The Story of Jewish Resistance* (Jewish Publication Society).

B. H. Haggin, 1900-1987

CRITICISM ON THE RECORD

THE DEATH last month of B. H. Haggin, who was a music critic for THE NEW REPUBLIC for many years, removed from the scene not only a great critic of music and musical performance, but also a distinguished embodiment—a throwback, one might say—of Matthew Arnold's notion of the function of criticism: "To see the object as in itself it really is." To my knowledge Bernard Haggin never referred to Arnold, but he liked to quote Bernard Shaw, whose brief career of writing about musical performances he found exemplary. Shaw gave us his version of the critic's task when he said that some people had pointed out evidences of personal feeling in his reviews "as if they were accusing me of a misdemeanor, not knowing that a criticism written without personal feeling is not worth reading. It is the capacity for making good or bad art a personal matter that makes a man a critic." But this making of art into a "personal matter" is exactly in the spirit of Arnold's praise of disinterestedness: the project of "inflexible honesty," of criticism "resolutely following the law of its own nature." In Arnold's famous though not always admired formulation, the business of criticism is "simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world." Haggin's business was to write about, to further, even to proselytize for, the best that was composed, performed, and danced in the world, and he brought to that business a single-mindedness that makes even Arnold or Shaw look diffuse, though more various, by comparison.

He conducted his critical operations for more than 60 years, beginning with early reviews in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, and coming to maturity in the 18 years, beginning in 1939, during which he wrote about music and records for the *Nation*. He wrote the Records column for TNR from 1957 to 1966, and served further terms with the *Hudson* and *Yale* reviews. In one of his early books, *Music on Records* (1938), he defended his practice of offering personal judgments that, he admitted, set higher valuations on music by Chopin and Tchaikovsky than did "general opinion," but also set lower valuations on some of Bach and Brahms than did that same opinion. After all, he said, "if I take away with one hand it is to give with the other: if I take away some of Bach's Partitas or Brahms's Intermezzi, it is to give Chopin's Polonaises. . . . If I take away Brahms's Symphony No. 1 it is to give Tchaikovsky's Pathétique—to say nothing of Brahms's No. 4." And he added, convincingly, that the total of what he gave was more than most readers would be able to acquire for a long time—"before the end of which they will have reached the point where they will have tastes of their own, and will know whether they want to accept my judgment or reject it." In that book, and in the ones to follow—the revised *Music on Records*, *The New Listener's Companion* in its various editions, *Music and Ballet*, and his collections of reviews—he spelled out his reasons for preferring one composer, one piece of music, one recorded performance to another. Distinguishing among the best, the good, and the not-so-good work of various artists, he gave and took away; but what he gave in my case was indeed more than I was able to acquire for a long time.

The *New York Times* obituary said, rather disapprovingly, that he "worshiped certain artists, notably Arturo Toscanini, at the expense of all others." Certainly Haggin helped me pay attention to (in an often-used phrase of his) the "plastic continuity" of Toscanini's performances of Beethoven, Schubert, and Dvořák, of Haydn, Berlioz, and Verdi. But, as a pianist, I found most useful his writing about Artur Schnabel's playing of Mozart and Beethoven concertos and sonatas, and of Schubert's posthumous sonatas: about the "meditative" character of Schnabel's approach, which operated both with powerful intellect and powerful emotion; the greatness of the playing, even as it sometimes contained technical flaws and distortions of phrase. But Haggin didn't "worship" Schnabel at the expense of all other pianists, nor did he worship Toscanini at the expense of all other conductors. He championed, though on occasion searchingly criticized, Lipatti and Cliburn and Gould, Ashkenazy and Pollini. By pointing to details in their performance of various works he helped me hear new

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things in the works themselves—in many cases introduced me to those works. Similar things happened with the Budapest String Quartet, and Balanchine's *Apollo*, and the quality of Bix Beiderbecke's cornet tone.

I BEGAN TO READ Haggin in graduate school, when I was also reading F. R. Leavis's literary criticism. Both Haggin and Leavis insisted on giving and taking away, on ranking artists and their works (in *Music on Records* Haggin divided Sibelius into The Good Works, The Lesser Works, The Poor Works, and The Worst Works). Both were heady, exhilarating fare for someone trying to get his intellectual and aesthetic bearings. Both had eventually to be resisted, and though they insisted that disagreement about a poem or a piece of music was legitimate, even necessary, it was hard to disagree with them. Soon after I met Haggin I tried to argue with his low opinion of Bach's Concerto for Violin and Oboe, but didn't get far. Just two years ago, when I wrote him about enjoying Christopher Hogwood's recordings of Mozart symphonies, he shot back with the strong suggestion that it must have been Mozart, not Hogwood, I was enjoying.

Like Leavis he was notoriously "difficult" as a person, invariably quarreling with the magazines he wrote for and intransigent about his principles. When I invited him, years ago, to lecture at Amherst, the title of his talk was, characteristically, "The Approach to Music" (not "An Approach"). And when after it a student asked whether perhaps musicology might in some cases be of some use as far as listening went, Haggin told him brusquely that no, it was not, ever. Afterward, at a carefully arranged party (once, at another party, a reckless guest had insisted on singing Puccini to him, with disastrous results), one of my colleagues praised a performance of Furtwängler's. On the way back to the inn Haggin said what a nice party it had been, but how very strange it was that this seemingly nice colleague of mine had praised the Furtwängler performance. It was the capacity for making good or bad art a personal matter that made Haggin difficult to deal with, and a critic of the highest order. Randall Jarrell, whose friendship with him was one of the pleasing events in recent cultural history, once spoke of Haggin's "clear, troubled, rapturous spirit," and charged him with having "the shameless honesty of the true critic—he couldn't lie to you if he tried." The *Times* obituary stated bluntly that "there are no survivors." True indeed, and that was the way Haggin wanted it.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

Dorothy Parker ("Pain in the Sass," June 1), Frank Rich attributes a well-known quote to Parker, writing: "One can hardly discuss this biography, after all, without recycling its subject's memorable verdict on another new book of long ago: 'It was written without fear and without research.'" The author of that quote is actually Carl L. Becker. It is from his essay "The Reviewing of Historical Books," which appeared in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1912*. Professor Becker was referring to the 1911 book *Social Forces in American History* by the Marxian Socialist Algie M. Simons.

JOSEPH TANNENBAUM
Bridgeport, Connecticut

KISS-OFF

To the editors:
I enjoyed Hendrik Hertzberg's article on Gary Hart's "Sluicegate" disaster (June 1), but I think he missed the central point. Lack of judgment was indeed the issue that soured the red-blooded American electorate on Hart. Here is a man who had a good chance to be president of the United States, and threw it away for a beautiful woman that he insists he didn't even seduce. What kind of judgment is that? You'd think giving up being president would be worth more than a good-night kiss.

SAMUEL M. COHON
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The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

TRB, *from page 4*

getting caught. President Reagan, with his "smoking gun" remark, has now brought up the Watergate analogy. Leaving aside the question of the president's own involvement, is Iranamok worse than Watergate or not as bad? Some say not as bad since the principal players, at least the government officials among them, were motivated by idealism, albeit misplaced, rather than by personal greed and ambition. Some say worse, for a similar reason: the subversion of democracy by those in power out of ideological motives is scarier than mere personal corruption.

Noble motives are not to be sneered at. The more we learn about Oliver North, the more it seems that any love of freedom was just the spice for something more clinical in his psychic stew. But it's reasonably clear that his higher-ups at the NSC, in the State Department, and in the White House had higher-minded aims than the Nixon crowd. They truly want democracy in Central America and truly believe that running the *contra* war is the right way to achieve this goal.

The vice at the root of Iranamok, which makes it both better and worse than Watergate, is moral arrogance. It's fine to believe deeply in a cause, but it's healthy to retain a small doubt, a suspicion that you might be mistaken. For those in power in a democracy, it's vital. Moral humility is the logical basis for all the democratic virtues. What is a small deception of Congress or an afternoon at the document shredder compared to the future of freedom in Central America? Respect for the possibility that you might get caught is not a sufficient deterrent. There must also be respect for the possibility that you might be wrong.

Washington is awash in examples of activities in contempt of law and democratic procedure—not wildly dissimilar to helping the *contras*—that look pretty good in hindsight. Was Roosevelt wrong to have supplied weaponry to Britain before we entered World War II? Were Americans wrong to have run guns to the incipient Israeli army in 1948? Drawing distinctions between this bit of illegality and that one—government official versus private action, secret versus open, and so on—is a swell parlor game. The more important point is that hindsight is omniscient, but people who view their current actions as if in hindsight are dangerous. We have the democratic rule of law precisely because we don't have hindsight.

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JERUSALEM DIARIST

A Speech Not Given

HAD THE Hebrew University not awarded honorary degrees to every prime minister beginning with David Ben-Gurion, it would have been unthinkable to bestow one on someone so unworthy as the present incumbent, Yitzhak Shamir. With Jewish and Arab students demonstrating outside the great amphitheater on Mount Scopus, it wasn't clear until minutes before the ceremony whether Shamir would even show up. If he didn't, another recipient would have to give the speech. At the last minute Shamir's security people decided that his appearance would not be a threat to his own safety or to public order. So my speech went undelivered. It would have been recognizable to readers of TNR. Coming 20 years after the Six-Day War, it would have been celebratory in tone. The anniversary marks the rescue of the Jewish state by its own soldiers from foes not unfairly known for fanaticism—foes with politicidal, if not genocidal, intent. But my address also would have been reproachful. One theme I meant to touch on is apt both for our country and for Israel: the increasing disregard for legality as a minimally binding norm. The Pollard affair, the Shin Beth scandals (in one of which the Israeli security police killed two Palestinian bus hijackers), and their associated cover-ups were not the beginning of this deterioration, and won't be the end. But they've been so traumatic for Israelis that they could be the point of return.

SHAMIR IS NOT a man who puzzles. National chauvinists do not live easily with doubt: it cramps their style. Shamir's government survives only on the sufferance of a tiny band of ultrareligious obscurantists who, in a Knesset split more or less evenly between the big parties, hold the balance of power. Last week, to appease the zealots, the government had to buy 200,000 tons of wheat from the United States, and throw away an equivalent of domestic production grown in violation of a long-ignored biblical injunction that land should lie fallow every seven years. Shamir tolerates this foolishness, though he knows that some of these zealots (who believe that the Jewish state is invalid pending the millennium) are as hostile to the Zionist enterprise as the Arabs.

THE LABOR PARTY also truckles to the religious zealots, and is also implicated in the scandals (though, unlike Shamir's Likud, it recognizes that they are in fact scandals). And Labor hasn't been able to break the parliamentary impasse. When the representative system fails, free societies look to an independent judiciary. This is the case in Israel not less than in America. But the Israeli courts are working their way toward *Marbury* v. *Madison* without the advantage of a written constitution. The growing boldness of Israeli courts in challenging official misbehavior—and their success, which is evidence of the regard in which they are held—demonstrates the extent to which Israel is very much in the Western legal tradition. This is something else that makes it seem alien among its neighbors.

AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT a guarantor of the long-term essential decency of Israeli society is its military. The dire post-Lebanon warnings about the morale of the army have turned out to be wishful thinking by Israel's detractors. Today the country's three top military officers, one of whom I know fairly well, are straight out of the pages of some early 1950s romantic novel about Israel: intellectually austere, morally scrupulous, personally forceful, idealistically committed, humanly sensitive—not least to adversaries. Too good to be true? The third man in the chain of command was virtually guilty of insubordination outside Beirut in 1982. An army that integrates such dissenters at the top is one that takes the dissent seriously. On a visit to the Golan we met a charismatic colonel who has spent almost a decade defending the Heights from the Syrians. He would give them up, and much of the West Bank too, he said, for genuine peace. This elite soldier is really Israel's common man. No salient Arab voice has yet spoken to his eager ears, open mind, and willing heart.

NONE OF THIS TEXTURE came across in the Six-Day War commemorative specials on public television and radio, or in the multipart series in some of the big-city papers. My hometown sheet, the *Boston Globe*, observed the anniversary with a fawning interview of Yasir Arafat. Forgive me, but in the prestige media—except for the *New York Times*—it is "blame Israel first." The constant theme in these media was the willful brutality of the Israelis toward the Palestinian Arabs. It's not hard to produce Arabs to make the case, and there are always the Western journalists' favorite self-hating Israeli leftists to help. In one of the public TV documentaries, a pro-PLO Israeli called for the establishment of "soviets" of soldiers to resist the occupation. The prominence given to these minorities of one or two trivializes the real mainstream yearning for a way out of the trap of occupation. Some weeks ago, a brave Arab lawyer and civil liberties activist named Raja Shehadeh called a press conference to detail charges of rights abuses by the Israelis. But he also said, inter alia, that the Palestinians had more freedom under Israeli rule than at any time in the past and more than other Arabs enjoy elsewhere. This does not amount to a justification of the occupation—in his view or mine. Israel must hold itself to higher standards than those obtaining in her neighborhood: to Western standards. But it is the truth, readily apparent to anyone without malevolent intent. Shehadeh, of course, was hooted down, as realistic Arab voices usually are. Actually, he is lucky to be alive.

MUCH OF THE NOSTALGIA for the old preoccupation Zionist values comes from circles that were hostile to these values in the first place. Still, there is a Zionist imperative for a peaceful solution, which will necessitate a far-reaching territorial and functional compromise, complicated and yet obvious in its outlines. If there were Arab partners for such a deal, Shamir would soon be returned to the ranks of the frenzied opposition, an angle of vision heaven-made for his paranoiac visions of betrayal by fellow Jews. The Palestinian Arabs, however, need an agreement the most. Alas, they seem to have bound their destiny to a leadership that prefers the certain moral authority of representing a hopeless people to the risks of a traumatic settlement with the Jews. For this, Israel will suffer. But it is not to blame.

M. P.

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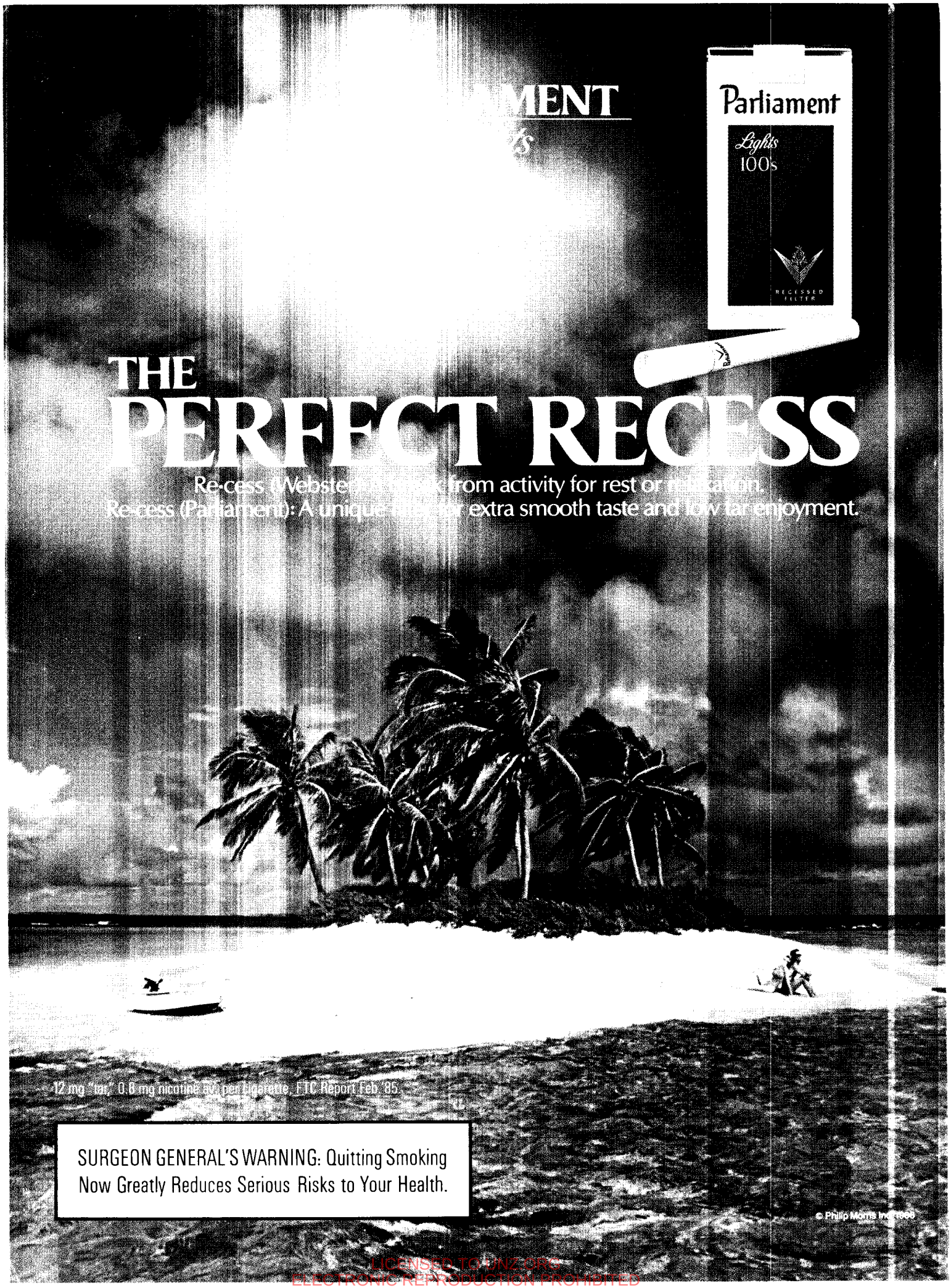

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